

SELECT
REMAIN

Of the REVEREND

JOHN MASON, M. A. K

Late RECTOR of

Water-Stratford, in the County of BUCKS,

AUTHOR of the

SONGS of PRAISE to ALMIGHTY GOD.

Containing

A Variety of devout and useful SAYINGS, on divers SUBJECTS, digested under proper Heads; Religious OBSERVATIONS; Serious ADVICE to YOUTH; Occasional REFLECTIONS, &c. and CHRISTIAN LETTERS.

Recommended by the Rev. I. WATTS, D. D.

WITH A

PREFACE, giving some ACCOUNT of the Author.

The THIRD EDITION.

By JOHN MASON, A. M.

Ασφαλέστερον ἔκ' ἀκινδυνότερον, τὸ περιμένειν τὴν ἐκδοσιν τῆς προ-
φητείας, ἢ τὸ κατασχεῖσθαι, καὶ καταμαρτυρεῖσθαι.

Iren. contra Hær.

L O N D O N :

Printed for RICHARD HETT, at the *Bible and Crown*;
and JOHN OSWALD, at the *Rose and Crown*, both
in the *Poultry*. M.DCC.XLV.

SELECT REMAINS

Of the Reverend

JOHN MASON, M.A.

Interpretor of

Walter Stannard, in the County of Bedford

Sheweth

Some of the most

Conspicuous

A Variety of his most valuable and rare
 Manuscripts, which he has been
 pleased to leave to the
 use of the Public, in the
 Library of the

University of Cambridge

Printed, by the Order of the Council

The Third Edition.

By JOHN MASON, A.M.

Printed by J. Stannard, at the Bible and Crown
 Press, in the Strand, near the Temple

LONDON:

Printed for Richardson Hart, at the Bible and Crown
 and John Gower, at the Rose and Crown, both
 in the Strand.





To the REVEREND

Mr. JOHN MASON,

At DORKING, in SURRY.

REVEREND *and* dear SIR,



Was pleas'd when you inform'd me, that you had a Design to print a new Edition of the SELECT REMAINS of your Reverend Grandfather. 'Tis very agreeable to hear, that the Spirit and Temper which runs through that Book, is so far maintain'd amongst us, that there are sufficient Readers to encourage these REMAINS to be republished. I have often thought, that this Col-

lection of short Sentences, under various Heads, are very proper to attend Christians of the middle Rank of Life, either in the Parlour or the Kitchen, in the Shop or the Work-House ; and for that End I have been a frequent Purchaser of them, to distribute in Families, among private Christians.

By spending one Minute in reading these Sentences now and then, serious Persons may find sufficient Matter to furnish them with frequent pious Meditations in every Circumstance of the Christian Life ; and they may be as happily useful in the Retirements of the Closet.

The Style and Manner appears to me much like that of the late Reverend Mr. *Henry*, whose practical Works have been so universally esteem'd.

steem'd. Tho' there is not any Affectation of a Train of close Reasoning here, or magnificent and new Ideas, which would tempt the polite and learned World to peruse them ; yet a serious Christian of the highest Rank can hardly read many of these Sayings without an inward Relish and Taste of the Truth of them.

The Letters to his Friends shew the Reader, that the Writer's Heart was always in Heaven, and may teach him upon every Occasion to bring Religion into his Converse with his Friends, whether by writing or speaking.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conceive it to be an useful Service to Mankind to have these Papers spread abroad in the World ; that every Occasion may be taken to support a

A 3

Sense

(vi)

Sense of ferious Religion amidst the many Temptations of this Life. And if you imagine, SIR, that my Opinion may be of any Advantage, you have my free Leave to make this Letter as publick as you please. I am,

S I R,

Your affectionate Brother,

and humble Servant,

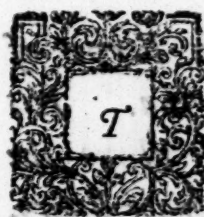
I. WATTS.

Newington,
Oct. 24. 1741.

. T H E



THE
P R E F A C E.



THE Author of these select Remains (who hath been dead now above Fifty Years) was a Person of as eminent a Character in the Religious World as most Ages have produc'd.—— He was by Principle a Conformist to the Establish'd Church of England, and died at Water-Stratford in the County of Bucks, A. D. 1694. having been Rector of that Place twenty Years.

It is not my Design to present the Reader with the History of the Life of Mr. Mason. This hath already been attempted, some Years since, by the Reverend Mr. Maurice, Rector of Tyringham, Bucks; and some others. But the most full and impartial Account hereof was drawn up by the Reverend Mr. Richard Mayo, Vicar of Kimbal, Bucks; whose pious Temper, and solid Judgment

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(attended with the Advantage of a long and intimate Acquaintance with Mr. Mason, and of living in the same Neighbourhood) rendered him very capable of such an Undertaking, and set him beyond all Suspicion of Partiality. ——— But this Account never was publish'd, nor I believe never will.

As for Mr. Mason's true Character, it may best be gather'd from those few Writings which he hath left behind him; and from these Select Remains, which are faithfully extracted from authentick Manuscripts.

He was certainly a Man of uncommon Fervor of Spirit in the Cause of God and Religion. His Learning was considerable, his Capacity above the common Level, and his Application extraordinary. For a deep and continual Sense of Religion upon his Spirit he had not many Equals; and for an honest and unaffected Zeal in the Service of Christ, he had few Superiors. ——— His Mind was susceptible of the warmest Impressions of Devotion. Whatever he utter'd (especially if it related to his Saviour) seem'd to come from the very Bottom of his Soul; and the Impression it made upon his Hearers was owing, in a great Measure, to that which they observ'd it first made upon him*.

* ——— Si vis me flere, dolendum est
Primum ipsi tibi.

Hor.

The

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The same is observable in his Writings. — We are touched not only with the Force and Beauty of a fine Thought, but with the easy and unaffected Manner in which it is delivered: Which shews that it came directly from the Author's Heart; and it moves us because we cannot but see it mov'd him.

His Stile is strong, concise, and plain, which of all others is certainly the fittest to convey the warmest Sentiments from and to the Heart. But the Success of his Ministerial Labours was not so much owing to his natural Oratory in the Pulpit, as to the strict and exemplary Piety of his Conduct out of it. If ever a Man made Religion his greatest Business and Pleasure, he did. How much he was in his Element when at Prayer, appears from the frequent Discharge of that Duty, viz. Six Times every Day as long as he was able; twice by himself, twice with his Wife, and twice with the Family. The first Posture he was in every Morning as soon as he was out of Bed, was upon his Knees; and the same as soon as he returned from a Journey. —

His Religious Converse was neither forced nor affected, but accompanied with an easy and chearful Address; and seem'd as natural to him as worldly Discourses were to others: Which made it not Burden-

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Burthensome and Awful, but Agreeable and Entertaining.

In his Sentiments of Church-Government he was for the Establish'd Form; in his Sentiments of Doctrines he was for the Calvinistical Scheme; but far from being a Bigot to either, as appeareth especially from those Letters of his which are inserted in this Collection. His extensive Charity seemed to arise from his profound Humility; Censoriousness being ever the genuine Off-spring of Pride, as Bigotry is of Ignorance. — In short, that I may not be thought to exceed the Bounds of Decency, or be suspected of giving any partial Embellishments to his Character, let us take it from Mr. Maurice himself; who certainly stands clear of all Charge of Partiality in favour of Mr. Mason; his Words are these,

*“ He was a Person of as great Devotion as ever
 “ I met with; and his main Aim was to make all
 “ he conversed with to be Religious. I think ve-
 “ rily he was not only Temperate, but Mortified;
 “ not only True and Just, but Kind and Charitable:
 “ Charitable to the good Name as well as to the
 “ Soul and Body. He was (nec Iracundus nec
 “ Irritabilis) neither Angry nor Hasty: Very
 “ Affable in his Carriage, and Meek in his Con-
 “ verse: Never over earnest, but (where he thought
 “ he*

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“ he could not exceed) for God. The Family where
“ he lived for many Years, and which he since often
“ visited, very lately told me, They thought him
“ as free from Vanity, as others could be from
“ Vice; and that they could never see wherein
“ he did too much, or where too little. I can-
“ not, indeed, say so much, yet I am ready to think,
“ that all his Redundancies, as well as Defects,
“ were designed in order to a greater Good.” See
Mr. Maurice’s Account, p. 28.

To this I shall only adjoin the Testimony of the Re-
verend Mr. Hammet, who succeeded Mr. Mason in
the Vicarage of Stanton-Berry, (upon his Presenta-
tion to the Rectory of Water-Stratford) and who
was afterwards Rector of Emmington in the same
County.

“ My Acquaintance (saith he) with Mr. Ma-
“ son, I have esteemed one of the greatest Mercies
“ I ever received. His Learning and Piety were
“ great, and his Humility deep. Divers Souls in
“ the Neighbourhood wherein he lived were Seals of
“ his Ministry. His Affections were so fervent,
“ and his Zeal so great, that as they were the Com-
“ fort, so they were the Admiration of those that
“ feared God, and liv’d near him. He was in his
“ Judgment and Practice, a Conforming Minister.
“ The Liturgy he read with Affection, and said, he
“ enjoy’d

“ enjoy’d much Communion with God while reading
 “ it. But he was far from a bitter Spirit against
 “ Dissenters. So great was his Love to Christ,
 “ that he had a Value for any one who spoke a sa-
 “ voury Word of him. And as he had a great Cha-
 “ rity for others, so he was most highly esteem’d b
 “ the most sober Churchmen and Dissenters. Mr.
 “ Baxter said, He was the Glory of the Church
 “ of England. Other judicious Ministers I have
 “ heard say, That they never conversed with a
 “ Minister, Conforming or Non-Conforming,
 “ that equal’d him. The Frame of his Spirit was
 “ so heavenly, his Deportment so humble and oblig-
 “ ing, his Discourse of spiritual Things (and little
 “ else could we bear from him) so weighty, with
 “ such apt Words and delightful Air, that it charm’d
 “ all that had any spiritual Relish, and was not so
 “ burthensome to others, as Discourses of that Na-
 “ ture have been from other Ministers.”

I have often thought how happy it would be for
 the Christian Church, if instead of contending about
 Forms and Speculations, we could all unite in this
 humble, charitable and truly pious Temper, with
 which this good Man was so eminently distinguished.
 The Prevalence of such a Spirit and Temper, I am
 sure, is more wanted, and more to be wished for, by
 every good Christian, than any of those Things about
 which

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*which we generally spend our warmest Zeal. If we must be zealous, let us (as he did) turn the Heat of our Zeal against Sin, and for the necessary and undisputed Interest of vital Holiness, and then it will not be so apt to blind or mislead us. If we cannot all be of the same Sentiments, we may all be of the same Spirit — But this is a Happiness rather to be desired than expected, till some Divine Power more generally correct our Tempers, and give the human Mind a better Disposition than what seems to prevail at present. — O! when shall we cease to strive about the Chaff, whilst we neglect the Wheat? When will Mankind be persuaded to look upon, and embrace Christianity, * not as a Set of Forms, or a Scheme of Notions, but as a Divine Discipline to reform the Heart and Life?*

It must be acknowledged indeed, that towards the Close of Mr. Mason's Life, this fair and beautiful Scene was much discoloured. His fervid Zeal, and warm Affections for the Honour of Christ (attended with the Decays of Nature) betrayed him into some Excesses in the Millenarian Scheme, which no judicious Christian can approve. — A lasting Monument of this plain Truth, viz. That the greatest Piety doth not secure the best of Men from Mistakes; and therefore it is dangerous for any Man to ven-

* *Vid. Life of Mr. John Howe, p. 78. Folio.*

ture to go a Jot beyond what is written: *And that* (as *Ireneus* saith) *with respect to obscure Prophecies*, It is much the safer Way to wait for the Accomplishment of them, than to give ourselves to Gueffings and Conjectures.

But over this unhappy Scene, Religion and Duty oblige me to throw a charitable Veil — especially since there is good Reason to believe, that he himself was not insensible of his Mistake before he died.

It is unhappy, that a Person so well qualified to convey a warm and lively Sense of Religion into the Minds of Men from the Pulpit, could not be persuaded to do it oftner from the Press. His invincible Modesty and Humility deprived us of this Advantage. — A most excellent and amiable Disposition! But seldom found in so close a Conjunction with those strong and vehement Passions of Zeal and Fervour, though perhaps the surest Character of a true godly Zeal.

All that he published himself were, the Songs of Praise to Almighty God upon several Occasions; together with the Songs of Solomon, first turned, then paraphras'd in English Verse; with the Addition of a sacred Poem on Dives and Lazarus. To which are added, Penitential Cries. Though only the six First of the Penitential Cries, and the last on Psalm lxxxvi. in three Parts, acknowledge
Mr.

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Mr. Mason for their Author ; the rest were carried on by another Hand.—Nothing can better shew the universal Esteem this Book hath met with from Christians of all Denominations, than its having gone through about sixteen Impressions : For although the last Edition be printed the Thirteenth, yet there have been several Impressions, without any exact Notice taken of the Number of the Edition. — Besides this, he published a little Catechism, with Verses and Sayings for little Children ; and towards the End of his Life, a Sermon upon the Parable of the Ten Virgins, called the Midnight Cry.—He hath left behind him in Manuscript, A short Paraphrase and Comment upon the whole Book of Revelation ; in which our common English Version is carefully compared with the Original. This he finish'd before his Thoughts had taken that unhappy Turn, with relation to the Millennium. But it seems it did not please him afterwards, and therefore he attempted another Essay on the same Book, which he did not live to go through with.—He likewise intended to write Critical Latin Comments upon particular Passages in all the Books of Scripture ; but lived to continue them no farther than the Second Book of Samuel.—There are also two Sermons of his extant, published and prefaced by the Reverend Mr. Shepherd of Braintree in Essex, stil'd Mr. Mason's Remains.

As

As for this Collection of Sayings, &c. I am not sensible that there needs any Apology for making them publick. They must be allowed to have a very apt Tendency to make the Mind serious and considerate, and to promote the Cause of real Religion; which will sufficiently justify my Endeavour to give them the most extensive Influence. And indeed I have often wondered that they were never published before by a late Pious and Reverend Divine, who had greater Advantages for it than I have; and by whose Decease the Manuscripts out of which this is extracted, are come into my Hands.*

The weighty Sayings of wise and virtuous Men have met with Esteem in all Ages, though the Respect that hath been shewn them hath been often more owing to the Name of their Authors, than to their own Excellency; for we cannot but be sensible, that a trite Observation from Cicero or Epictetus shall often be embraced with Rapture, while the Thoughts of a private Christian, though perhaps far more instructive and sublime, can scarce command the Attention. This (as I take it) proceeds not so much from a want of Discerning, as from a Fondness of being acquainted with the most celebrated Names of Pagan

* My dear and honoured Father, the late Reverend Mr. John Mason, Minister of Spaldwick, in the County of Huntington.

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Antiquity. And hence, I suppose, it is, that a Seneca, or a Socrates, so generally carries away the Bays from the Royal Preacher of Israel. For tho' I think it is certain, that the Proverbs and Maxims of Solomon are in every respect preferable to the most exquisite Documents of those Pagan Sages (whether we consider the Character and Capacity of their Author, the Beauty of the Sentiment, or the Force of the Expression) yet I apprehend, that a System of Ethics extracted from the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, would meet with a much colder Reception amongst a great part of Christians, than one collected from the Monuments of those wise and learned Heathens.—I have as great a Veneration for the Names of those virtuous Heroes, as, I think, is due to them. And, from the incomparable Mr. Howe, I am convinced, that a good Acquaintance with their Systems and Doctrines, is a very useful Ornament to every one that is devoted to the Service of the Gospel; and I believe it would be greatly for the Interest of it, if every Christian Minister were, in this Respect, a Wollaston, or a Campbel. But yet I see no Reason why we should set the Pagan above the Christian Philosopher, or prefer the common Thoughts of a Heathen Moralist before the more excellent Sentiments of a Christian Divine. But to return.

The Author of these Remains had an excellent Talent in the Sententious Way. He loved to deliver a Thought in as few and expressive Words as might be, as appears from these his Religious Maxims, and Sentences, the Reader is here presented with: Many of them are easy and natural, most of them strong and beautiful, and all of them devout and spiritual.

Most Persons are fond of Proverbs and current Sentences, which generally pass for decisive Maxims in Conversation. After a Person hath conversed thirty or forty Years in the World, he finds himself furnish'd with a good Store of these prudential Apophthegms; which he sometimes serves himself with to good purpose in common Life. If such kind of Religious Sayings as those of Mr. Mason, were but as familiar to us as our common Proverbs; and if Parents would but take the Pains to insinuate them into, and fix them in the tender Minds of their Children, I am satisfied it would answer a very valuable purpose in the Religious Life.

The serious Advice to Youth, as it is a plain and affectionate Perswasive and Directory to a Religious Conduct, I hope it may be of Service, not only to those to whom it is immediately address'd, but to all who sincerely desire to maintain a conscientious Walk with God.

The

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The Directions and Signs, &c. may be useful to doubting and discourag'd Christians; and to all who make Conscience of the great Duty of Self-Examination, and desire to know the true Habit and State of their Souls.

Mr. Mason was very happy in his Epistolary Stile and Talent; and if the common Maxim may be credited, that a Man's true Turn and Genius may best be known by his Letters; these which are here inserted will abundantly confirm the Character I have given of this excellent Man, in most of which we meet with the same genuine Zeal, and unaffected Fervour, which animates the rest of these Select Remains. Those from Letter X. to Letter XXXI. inclusively, were published A. D. 1694; the Year in which he died. The rest were never before printed, but in this Collection. They were preserved distinct in the former Edition, but are added together in this. To which are subjoined, Two or Three more, which are since come to Hand, and may be depended upon as Genuine.

Those poetical Pieces which were preserved in the first Edition, falling much below the Spirit of Mr. Mason's former Productions of this Nature, in the Opinion of very good Judges, it hath been thought proper to leave them out in this: which is the only Thing wanting in this Edition, which was inserted in the former.

If it be said, that this way of Writing is too Laconick, and savours too much of the Point and Jingle of the last Age, to please in this; I have only this to reply, that I am as little an Admirer of those pointed Conceits, and that affected Eccho of Words, which was reckoned an Ornament of Stile by some in the Beginning of the last Century, as any one can be. And I assure the Reader, that no Sentence hath been inserted into this Collection, for the Sake of this false Beauty. If indeed a strong and glowing Sentiment be sometimes conveyed in that kind of Language (which, I think is but seldom) I held it much better to preserve it for the Sake of the Thought, which will strike most Persons, than to omit it for the Sake of the Expression, which will offend but few.— But it must be remember'd, that there is a wide Difference between an affected Quaintness and a natural Turn. And when a strong and beautiful Sentiment is convey'd in a sententious and easy Stile, with what is called a natural Turn, it will ever make a deeper Impression, and be more pleasing than the same Sentiment convey'd in luxuriant Language, and prolix Period; and will be esteemed more elegant too, so long as Brevity and Perspicuity are the Beauties of Oratory.

However, had this Collection more of these little Defects of Stile, the pious Reader, I am sure, would easily excuse them, for the sake of that serious Strain,
and

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ana Spirit of true Devotion, that runs through the Whole. The devout Christian loves to be animated and impressed with a strong Sense of Divine Things in any Way. And in most of these devotional Maxims the Reader will find such a Life and Vigour, that I believe he cannot read them considerately, without finding himself not only seriously but warmly affected. I am sure I have often yielded to the Force of them my self in perusing, collecting, and transcribing them. And from the Effect they had upon my own Mind, I judged they might be of use to others, which is the only End I had in making them publick.

The whole of this Collection is principally intended for the Benefit of private Families, and for those Christians who desire to have their Hearts warmed with a Sense of Religion (the Necessity of which every true Christian often feels, and of the Want of which he often complains) and who are not well able to purchase larger Treatises. And if, by the Blessing of Almighty God, these Gleanings (of that Field from whence we might have expected a larger Harvest) may be subservient to the Cause of real Religion, and promote a Spirit of true Piety, inward as well as outward Holiness, I shall have reason to be thankful, and shall think my Pains of collecting and publishing them well bestowed.

THE

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Select

Select REMAINS

Of the REVEREND

JOHN MASON, M. A.

CH A P. I.

*Containing a Variety of Devout and
Useful Sayings on divers Subjects,
digested under proper Heads.*

Moral Observations and Instructions.

THOUGH few there be that care
to be virtuous, yet fewer there are
that would not be counted so.

Nothing but what is God's Dis-
honour should be our Shame.

We must not walk by Example, but by
Rule.

They that drive away Time, spur a free
Horse.

As often as a Man lays out for God, he lays
up for himself.

B

We

2 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

We have nothing that we can properly call our own, but what we have reason to be ashamed of.

We are never well informed of the Truth till we are conformed to the Truth.

A Conceit of Knowledge is the greatest Enemy to Knowledge, and the greatest Argument of Ignorance.

We remember many Things we should forget (as Injuries, Disappointments, &c.) but forget what we should remember (*viz* God and our Souls.)

They that presume most in Prosperity are soonest subject to Despair in Adversity.

Man may commend thee, but God may condemn thee.

When God punishes another, he threatens thee; when he wounds another, he warns thee.

It is as great a Mercy to be preserv'd in *Health*, as to be delivered from *Sickness*.

If you mind nothing but the Body, you lose Body and Soul too. If you mind nothing but Earth, you lose Earth and Heaven too.

As they, who for every slight Infirmary take Physic to repair their Health, do rather impair it; so they, who for every Trifle are eager to vindicate their Character, do rather weaken it.

Honesty is the best Policy, and Innocence the best Wisdom.

Improv

Improve the Wit you have bought at a dear Rate, and the Wisdom you have gained by sad Experience.

Learn of Christ, who was sensible of Injuries, yet patient under them.

Be lively but not light; solid but not sad.

Keep the Body under, but the Spirit up.

Keep such Company as God keeps.

What can you get by bad Company? If you are truly good they will either taunt you or despise you.

Take heed of being infected with the Breath of a profane Heart.

Let the Body wait upon the Soul, and both wait upon God.

Speak not well of yourself, nor ill of others.

Speak of Peoples Virtues, conceal their Infirmities: If you can say no good, say no ill of them.

To render Good for Evil is God-like, to render Good for Good is Man-like; to render Evil for Evil is Beast-like; to render Evil for Good is Devil-like.

Carry yourself submissively towards your Superiors; friendly towards your Equals; condescendingly towards your Inferiors; generously towards your Enemies; and lovingly towards all.

4 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

Of Religion in general.

It signifies nothing to say we will not change our *Religion*, if our *Religion* change not *us*.

If a Man lives and dies a meer Professor, it had been better for him if he had liv'd and dy'd a meer Heathen.

The Duty of Religion flows from a Principle of Religion.

It is not talking, but walking with God, that gives a Man the Denomination of a Christian.

Darkness may as well put on the Name of Light, as a wicked Man the Name of a Christian.

It is our main Business in this World to secure an Interest in the next.

A Desire of Happiness is natural, a Desire of Holiness is supernatural.

If God hath done that Good *for us* which he hath denied *to the World*, we ought to do that Service *for him* which is denied him *by the World*.

If we are willing, God will help us ; if sincere, God will accept us.

A serious Remembrance of God is the Fountain of Obedience to God.

If you forget God when you are young, God may forget you when you are old.

When a Christian considers the Goodness of God's Ways, he wonders that all the World doth

doth not walk in them. But when he considers the Blindness, and Depravity, and Prejudice of the Heart by Nature, he wonders that any should enter upon them.

Make your Calling sure, and your Election is sure.

Uneven Walking, with a Neglect of Watching, makes a disconsolate Soul.

Four Things a Christian should especially labour after, viz, to be *Humble* and *Thankful*, *Watchful* and *Cheerful*.

If we would not fall into Things unlawful, we must sometimes deny ourselves in those that are lawful.

Salvation then draws near to Man when it is his main Care.

The Ordinances of God are the Means of Salvation; but the God of Ordinances is the Author of Salvation.

Religion must be our Business, then it will be our Delight.

It will cost something to be Religious, it will cost more not to be so.

A Christian's Life is nothing else but a short Trial of his Graces.

Lukewarmness is the best Natural, but the worst Spiritual Temper a Man can be in.

There are few but are sometimes in a serious Fit; but how few are in a serious Frame, who have an abiding Sense of God upon their Hearts?

6 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

It is a voluntary *Cannot* that keeps the Soul from God.

The Gate which leads to Life is a strait Gate, therefore we should fear ; it is an open Gate, therefore we should hope.

Do the Lord's Work in the Lord's Time ; pray whilst God hears ; hear whilst God speaks ; believe whilst God promises ; obey whilst God commands.

That Man hath no Sense of Mercy that wants a Sense of Duty.

Two Duties must run through a Christian's Life, like the Warp through the Woof, *Blessing* and *Trusting*.

Religion is much talk'd of, but little understood, till the Conscience be awaken'd ; then a Man knows the Worth of a Soul and the Want of a Saviour.

Then doth Religion flourish in the Soul, when it knows how to naturalize spiritual Things, and to spiritualize natural Things.

We may judge of our eternal State by our spiritual State ; and of our spiritual State by the delightful and customary Actions of our Lives.

If we expect to live with Christ in Heaven, we must live to him on Earth.

We may expect God's *Protection* so long as we keep within God's *Bounds*.

Our Opportunities are (like our Souls) very precious ; but if they are lost they are irrecoverably lost.

That

That Preaching that is plain, pure, powerful, and practical, Men are apt to dislike.

Religion begins with a Knowledge of a Man's Self, and is perfected with the Knowledge of God.

This is a threefold Mystery; a Gospel published in the Midst of an ungodly World; a little Church preserv'd in the Midst of Devils; and, a little Grace kept alive in the Midst of Corruptions.

The Service of God is the Soul's Work; and the Favour of God is its Reward.

A Man may be imperfect in his Obedience, and yet impartial.

God never fails them that wait for him, nor forsakes them that work for him.

It is a Sign of advanc'd Grace when Opinion is swallow'd up of Religion.

Of G O D.

That there is a God, may be proved by considering the Manner of Propagation of Mankind by Generation. Thus,

(1) There must have been *one first Man*. (2.) This first Man must have had some *Maker*. (3.) This Maker of him must himself be *unmade*. Therefore, (4.) There must have been eternally some *unmade Being*; and that is God.

We may *truly* conceive of God, though we can't *fully* conceive of him. We may have

8 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

right Apprehensions of him, though not an exact Comprehension of him.

Then our Conceptions of God's Attributes are carnal, when our high Thoughts of one give us low Thoughts of another.

His Goodness makes his Majesty amiable, and his Majesty makes his Goodness wonderful. His Love is not abated by his Greatness, nor his Greatness by his Love. His Holiness hinders him not from dwelling with the *Poor in Spirit*.

Nothing is great enough for him to admire, who is infinite Majesty; nothing is mean enough for him to despise, who is infinite Mercy.

God deals with his Servants, not as a passionate Master, but as a compassionate Father.

What pleaseth God should please us, because it pleaseth God.

A Sight of God begins a Saint on Earth, and perfects him in Heaven.

God takes notice of every particular Man as if there were none else; and yet takes Notice of all as if they were but one Man.

God repented that he *made* Man, but never repented that he *redeemed* Man.

We cannot live *naturally* without God, how then can we live *happily* without him?

We may know what God intends *for* us, by what he hath wrought *in* us.

They

They that have God for their God have Angels for their Guard.

Many have lost *for* God, but none ever lost *by* God. If they have lost in Temporals, they have been eternal Gainers, *Matth. xix. 29.*

This is a sure Rule; *God never takes any Thing from his People, but he gives them something better in the stead of it.*

God is a great God, and therefore we should wait upon him; he is a good God, and therefore it is not in vain to wait upon him.

A Man may be a Worshipper of the true God, and yet not a true Worshipper of God.

The *lowest* Reverence is due to the *highest* Majesty.

Fear God for his *Power*, *trust* him for his *Wisdom*, *love* him for his *Goodness*, *praise* him for his *Greatness*, *believe* him for his *Faithfulness*, and *adore* him for his *Holiness*.

All Creatures are as nothing compared with God, and *absolutely* nothing without God.

Of the Fear of GOD.

They that fear God least have the greatest Reason to fear him.

A Fear of departing from God is a good Means to keep us from departing from him.
The

10 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

The more we fear God, the less we shall fear Men.

They that will not fear God in Prosperity, will be afraid of him in Adversity.

Of the Presence of G O D.

If God's earthly Presence is so good, what is his heavenly Presence?

If God's being with us is so sweet, what is it to be with God?

There is Joy in God's *gracious* Presence, but in his *glorious* Presence there is *fulness* of Joy.

There are Pleasures in approaching to God here, but at his Right Hand there are *Pleasures for evermore*.

The nearer we are to Christ, the nearer is God to us.

The Presence of God's Glory is in Heaven; the Presence of his Power on Earth, the Presence of his Justice in Hell, and the Presence of his Grace with his People.—If he deny us his powerful Presence we fall into nothing; if he deny us his *gracious* Presence we fall into Sin; if he deny us his merciful Presence we fall into Hell.

Of the Love of G O D.

If the Love of God set us on Work, the God of Love will pay us our Wages.

God loveth his People to the End, therefore they shall endure to the End.

He loveth them *in* his Son, and *as* his Son, and as long as he loveth his Son.

We hated God without a Cause, and he loved us without a Cause.

Love begets Love. 'Tis a Flame that communicates itself. They that have much *forgiven* them, much *done* for them, much laid *out* for them, and much laid *up* for them, will love much.

Our Love to God is the Reflection of his Love to us; 1 *John* iv. 19. *We love him because he first loved us.*

Of CHRIST.

Christ made himself like to us, that he might make us like to himself.

Christ must needs have died, how else could Sin be expiated, the Law satisfied, the Devil conquered, and Man be saved?

They that deny themselves *for* Christ, shall enjoy themselves *in* Christ.

Men had rather hear of Christ crucified for them, than be crucified for Christ.

If Christ denied innocent Nature out of Love to *us*, shall not we deny corrupt Nature out of Love to *him*?

Christ by his Death appeared to be the *Son of Man*, by his Resurrection he appeared to be the *Son of God*.

Christ was the great Promise of the Old Testament, the Spirit is the great Promise of the New.

Christ's

12 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

Christ's Strength is the Christian's Strength.

If we would stand, Christ must be our Foundation ; if we would be safe, Christ must be our Sanctuary.

In regard of natural Life, we live in God ; in regard of spiritual Life, Christ lives in us.

He that thinks he hath no need of Christ hath too high Thoughts of himself ; he that thinks Christ cannot help him hath too low Thoughts of Christ.

Presumption abuses Christ, Despair refuses him.

Christ satisfied God to the uttermost, and therefore can save Sinners to the uttermost.

The Blood of Christ, which satisfied the Justice of God, may satisfy the Conscience of an awakened Sinner.

If Sin was better known, Christ would be better thought of.

If Sin doth not taste bitter, Christ cannot taste sweet.

When Sin is Hell, Christ is Heaven.

There is no Passage from Sin to Holiness 'till we are passed from Sin to Christ.

Christ may have an Interest in us, though we may not be able to see our Interest in him.

Christ hath entreated God to be reconciled to us, and now he entreats us to be reconciled to God.

God

God will give us nothing for *our* sakes; but he will deny us nothing for *Christ's* sake.

None are so low as Christ was, none so lowly, none so loving.

We may know what Christ hath done *for* us, by what he hath done *in* us.

Creatures die that our Bodies may live, Christ dy'd that our Souls may live.

Our Judge, instead of condemning us, stepped from the Bench and died for us.

Christ is to be a Believer's Judge, and if he was to chuse his Judge he could not chuse a better Friend.

As God glorifies Christ in Heaven, so the Spirit glorifies him on Earth, in the Hearts of Believers.

A Believer's Comfort in living is to live to Christ; and in dying it is that he shall go to Christ.

The Blood of Christ upon the Heart is the greatest Blessing, upon the Head is the greatest Curse.

It matters not who are our Accusers, if Christ be our Advocate.

Christ's Blood	} is the Soul's	Ransom,
Christ's Spirit		Comforter,
Christ's Word		Food,
Christ's Supper		Feast,
The Lord's Day		Market Day.

14 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

A Christian may triumph in the Death of Christ! *O Death! where is thy Sting? O Grave! where is thy Victory? O Hell! where is thy Terror? O World! where is thy Malice? O Sin! where is thy Strength? O my Soul! where are thine Accusers?*

There is no Honour like a Relation to Christ; no Riches like the Graces of Christ; no Learning like the Knowledge of Christ; and no Persons like the Servants of Christ.

Christ executes the Office of a Prophet in our effectual Calling; of a Priest in our Justification; and of a King in our Sanctification. ----- Let us then hear him as our Prophet; rely on him as our Priest; and obey him as our King. ----- Think not the worse of him for his Manger or his Cross. As he ceaseth not to be Man in his highest Estate, so he was God in his lowest. His Words were Oracles, and his Works Miracles. His Life was a Pattern; his Death a Sacrifice; his Resurrection Glorious; his Ascension Triumphant; his Intercession Prevalent, and his Coming again will be Magnificent. All the Angels in Heaven adore him; all the Devils in Hell fear him; and all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* must stand before him.

Own Christ's Person, love his Name, embrace his Doctrine, obey his Commands, and submit to his Cross. His Person is lovely, his Name is sweet, his Doctrines are comfortable, his Commands are rational, and his
Cross

Cross honourable.---- The very Angels admire him, and shall not we?---

A depraved Understanding will not yield that the Creature is so bad, and that Christ is so good!---

O! did we but know ourselves, and our Saviour! We are Poor, but he is Rich; we are Dead, but he is Life; we are Sin, but he is Righteousness; we are Guiltiness, but he is Grace; we are Misery, but he is Mercy; we are lost, but he is Salvation;--- If we are willing, he never was otherwise.--- He ever lives, ever loves, ever pities, ever pleads. He loves to the End, and saves to the Uttermost, all that come unto him.

A pathetic Invitation to Sinners to come to Christ.

Have you Sins, or have you none? ---- If you have, whither should you go, but *to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World?* Have you Souls, or have you none?----If you have, whither should you go but to the *Saviour of Souls?* Is there a Life to come, or is there not?--- If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only *bath the Words of eternal Life?* Is there a wrath to come, or is there not?---- If there is, whither should you go but to him, who only can *deliver from the Wrath to come?* -----And will he not receive you?---- If he yielded himself into the Hands of them that

16 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

that sought his Life, will he hide himself from the Hearts of them that seek his Mercy? If he was willing to be taken by the Hand of Violence, is he not much more willing to be taken by the Hands of Faith? He that died for thy Sins, will he cast thee off for thine Infirmities?---O! come, come, come!-----I charge you come-----I beseech you come-----come, and he will give you Life. Come, and he'll give you Rest. Come, and he will receive you. Knock, and he will open to you. Look to him, and he will save you.---Did ever any come to him for a Cure, and go away without it?----Thou wouldst find something in thyself, but thou findest nothing---but what thou hast reason to be ashamed of; but let not that hinder, but further thy coming.---Come as thou art, come poor, come needy, come naked, come empty, come wretched, only come, only believe; his Heart is free, his Arms are open, 'tis his Joy and his Crown to receive thee.---If thou art willing, he never was otherwise.

Of the Love of CHRIST.

Nothing grieves Christ more than to have his Love slighted; nothing pleaseth him more than to have it accepted.

The Love of Christ is stronger than Death, sweeter than Life, and better than Wine.

Every new Sense of Christ's Love adds new Degrees to ours.

The

The Love of Christ both a Height without a Top, a Depth without a Bottom, a Length without an End, and a Breadth without a Limit, *Eph. iii. 18, 19.*

Christ's Sorrows, Griefs and Sufferings, can be paralleled with nothing, but his Love.

Of Saints, or true Believers.

God hath no Sons that are unlike Himself.

Believers are Children of the same Father, Members of the same Son, and Habitations of the same Spirit, Fellow-Citizens, Fellow-Servants, Fellow-Soldiers, Fellow-Travellers, and Fellow-Heirs.

None are so easily acquainted, so close knit together, and so much endeared to one another, as real Christians.

One true Christian differs from another without Breach of Charity, as Friends love one another, though in different Garbs.

It is not so considerable in a Christian, what his *Judgment* is, as what his *Temper* is.

Heart-Work is better than *Head Work*; and, it is a better Temper to be fervent in *Charity*, than in *Disputes*.

Better be a melancholy Saint, than a mad Sinner.

If good Men are *sad*, it is not because they are good, but because they are *not better*.

18 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

Whom God chuses, the World refuses.

God's Gold is the World's Dross. They, of whom the World is not worthy, are counted not worthy to live in the World.

If Believers are condemned *by* the World, let them remember that they shall not be condemned *with* the World. Sin may live in a Believer, but a Believer cannot live in Sin. It may lose its Dominion, though not leave its Habitation.

A good Man is so far acquainted with the Corruption of his own Heart; that, instead of condemning others, he is apt to account them better than himself.

A Child of God had rather ten thousand Times suffer for Christ, than that Christ should suffer by him.

The Imperfection of a Believer's *Sanctification*, makes him continually depend on Christ for his *Justification*.

When a Child of God thinks he can go alone, he is nearest falling.

A true Christian may be weary *in* serving God, but he is never weary *of* serving him.

He is neither afraid of dying nor living; he desires to go to Heaven to *see* Christ; yet, is willing to stay upon Earth to *serve* Christ.

If the Children of God did but know what was best for them, they would perceive that God did that which is best for them.

A Christian shall be here as long as he hath any Work to do for Christ, or as long as Christ hath any Work to accomplish in him : Christ will fit him *for* himself, and then take him *to* himself.

A true Christian lives like a Saint, and begs like a Sinner.

All God's Children have received God's Spirit, whereby they are made humble, believing and holy ; humble in Regard of their Sins, believing in Regard of Christ, and holy in Regard of their Conscience and Care to keep all God's Commandments.

A good deal of the Trouble of God's People ariseth from a Mistake and Misapprehension of God : They judge of God by their *Sense*, not by his *Promise* ; by their *own Frame*, and not by his *constant Nature*.

As Saints have Groanings unutterable, so they have Joys unutterable.

A Christian is what he is between God and his own Soul.

All Saints have had their Doubtings. David, *cast me not off in mine old Age*, Psal. lxxi. 9. Asaph, *will the Lord cast off for ever ? and will he be favourable no more ?* Psal. lxxvii. 7. Peter, *Lord, is it I ?* Matt. xxvi. 22. And Paul, *lest I should be a Cast-away*, 1 Cor. xi. 27.

But Believers, remember, there may be true Grace, where there is no Comfort ; there may be Saving Faith without Assurance,

rance. A Soul may be in a pardoned State, though in a troubled State. Your Sins can never be triumphant, your Graces never decay, your Souls can never be lost, your God and you never be separated. The Devil shall as soon pluck Christ out of Heaven, as out of a Believer's Heart. He sits as fast upon his Throne *here*, as *there*. The Devil could not enter into the Herd of Swine without Christ's Leave; and will he let him worry his Lambs?

Believe firmly, hope joyfully, love fervently, pray earnestly, walk humbly, work diligently, and wait quietly; and all this will be graciously considered.

Hold up, hold on, hold out, hold fast that which you have received; still watch, still pray, still believe; fight and run, that you may obtain; 'tis but a little while, and he that comes will come, and will not tarry; 'tis but a little while, and your Warfare is accomplished, and your Iniquities shall be everlastingly separated from you; your Sins and Sorrows, Tears and Fears, fled and gone for ever; and you meet with an unspeakable Reward.

Of Sinners.

Are not they miserable, who, if they had their Wish, could not be happy?

They that will not hear Christ say *come to me*, in a Day of Grace, shall hear him say *depart from me*, in a Day of Judgment.

If we are Graceless here, we shall be speechless hereafter.

Sinners are first driven, then drawn to God.

The Conversion of a Sinner is a greater Wonder than the Creation of the World.

If a Sinner's Thoughts be not changed by Grace, they will be changed hereafter by Experience.

They that are least serious, have the greatest Reason to be so ; their *Condition* is awful, and therefore their *Disposition* ought to be so.

Hatred is due to Sin, Compassion to the Sinner.

Sinners, if you will not hear God call to Day, you will harden you Hearts to Day : And, if you harden them to Day, God may harden them to Morrow. If you will not set about Repentance to Day, God may justly deny you his Assistance to Morrow.

If you will not do that which God hath enabled you to do, how can you look that he should do that for you which, of yourselves, you cannot do ?

Don't think to begin to live, when thou art ready to die.

If you would not go to Hell, you must know that you have deserved it.

22 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

Let not your Hearts flatter you, nor the World comfort you, when God threatens you.

God tells you, if you repent, you shall find Mercy; and will you not believe him? Because thou hast been a Sinner, wilt thou make God a Lyar?

Sinners, you must be changed; if your Hearts be not changed for the better, your Condition will be changed for the worse.

The worst of the Ways of God, are better than the best of the Ways of Sin.

Of SIN.

He that pleads for Sin, is an Advocate for his Accuser.

God allows us any Thing but Sin.

If Sin be in the Fashion, we must be out of it.

Then a Man shews himself to be a Christian, when he chuses rather to suffer than sin.

Sin digs Graves for Bodies, and kindles Hell for Souls.

That is a sufficient Cause for Trouble, that is the Cause of all the Trouble in the World.

Should not we groan for that which makes the whole Creation groan?

If the Heart be under the Power of Sin, the Conscience is under the Guilt of Sin. If thou art not purified, thou art not pardoned.

A Man

A Man can never leave Sin thoroughly, till he loaths it heartily.

We must be *sick* of Sin, before we can be *dead* to Sin.

There is no Sin a Man can be tempted to, but he will find greater Comfort in resisting than in indulging.

How can we say that we love Christ, if we love Sin, which was an Enemy to his Life and Soul when he was on Earth; and is an Enemy to his Glory now he is in Heaven?

Our Sins cried as loud to Heaven, as the *Jews* did to Earth, that *Christ might be crucified*.

Go to *Golgotha*, and see what Sin did there.

Christ did not die *for* Sin, that we might live *to* Sin.

Christ died that our Sins might die, and our Souls live.

Sin received its Sentence in the Death of Christ; but it doth not receive its Execution till the Death of a Christian.

All our Sins shall not separate between God and our Souls, if Unbelief doth not separate between Christ and our Souls.

There is no Sin but what may be traced up to Unbelief.

He that glories in his Sin, glories in his Shame.

24 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

We should be ashamed of Sin, but not ashamed to take Shame for Sin.

Get this Principle into your Hearts ; *there is nothing got by Sin, nor lost by Holiness.*

By suffering we may avoid sinning, but by sinning we cannot avoid suffering.

One that truly fears God, is afraid of Sin ; he sees more Evil in it than in all the Evil in the World.

If we be not humble for Sin, we derogate from the Majesty of God ; if we despair under it, we derogate from his Mercy.

One that is sincere hates Sin in himself, and laments it in others.

Our Hatred of Sin must be irreconcilable, and our Endeavours against it perpetual.

The Sins of the Wicked anger Christ, the Sins of his People grieve him.

Want of Sorrow for Sin, more argues want of Love to Christ, than the Sin itself.

Sin is a Believer's Burden and Wound, but Christ is his Cure and Comfort.

Sin is the Sicknes of the Soul, and Christ the only Physician, that can cure it of the *Leprosy* of Profaneness, the *Fever* of Concupiscence, the *Dropsey* of Covetousness, the *Tympany* of Pride, the *Lethargy* of Luke-warmness, the *Phrenzy* of Passion, and the *Palsy* of Unbelief.

Hatred is Heart-murder ; Lust is Heart-adultery ; and Covetousness Heart-stealing.

How

How tender is our Flesh ? How hard our Hearts ? *i. e.* How much more sensible are we of Suffering than Sin ?

We should fear to *think* That before God, which we are afraid to *do* before Man ; for God knows our *Hearts* better than any Man knows our *Faces*.

Vain Thoughts are Sin's Advocates, and Christ's Adversaries.

God is so *holy*, that he would not suffer such an Evil as Sin ; but that he is so *wise*, that he can bring Good out of it.

Of REPENTANCE.

Repentance begins in the Humiliation of the Heart, and ends in the Reformation of the Life.

Though we want *Power* to repent ; yet we do not want *Means* to repent, nor Power to use these *Means*.

He that repents of Sin, as Sin, doth implicitly repent of all Sin.

Let not sinful Pleasures prevent godly Sorrows.

An humble Confession of Sin brings Shame to ourselves, but Glory to God.

You cannot repent too soon. There is no Day, like To-Day. Yesterday is gone, to Morrow is God's, not your own. And, think how sad it will be to have your Evidences to seek, when your Cause is to be try'd ; to have

26 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

have your Oil to buy, when you should have it to burn !

Let the Hopes of Mercy encourage to the Exercise of Repentance.

Turn to God, and he will turn to you ; and then you are happy, though all the World turn against you.

If we think amiss of Christ, we shall never believe : If we think well of Sin, we shall never repent.

If we put off our Repentance to another Day, we have a Day more to repent of, and a Day less to repent in.

If we study to honour God, we cannot do it better than by confessing our Sins, and laying ourselves low at the Feet of Christ.

Godly Sorrow is the Sorrow of Love ; the Melting of the Heart : Love is the Pain and Pleasure of a mourning Heart.

The *Evangelical* Penitent loves and grieves.
“ Alas (*saieth he*) that I, who am as high
“ as Heaven in Privilege, should be as deep
“ as Hell in Iniquity ! Instead of repenting,
“ I have run farther on Score ! Instead
“ of honouring God, I have dishonoured
“ him ! Instead of pleasing him, I have provoked him ! Instead of following him,
“ I have forsaken him !-----O what Bowels
“ have I grieved ! How can I sin against my
“ Jesus ! Shall I deny and crucify my Saviour ! He was crucified *for* me, and
“ shall

shall he be crucified by me? Shall I wound his Heart, and pierce his Side again, and give him Cause to say, *these are the Wounds I received in the House of my Friends.*"

Of FAITH.

Reliance is the Essence of Faith, Christ is the Object, the Word is the Food, and Obedience the Proof: So that true Faith is a *depending upon Christ for Salvation in a Way of Obedience*, as he is offered in the *Word*.

The true Tears of Repentance flow from the Eye of Faith.

Though Faith be necessary to our Justification, good Works are necessary to our Salvation.

We must derive our Works from Faith, and demonstrate our Faith by our Works.

God is often pleased to imbitter a Life of Sense, that he may indear the Life of Faith.

A steadfast Faith begets a constant Peace.

The more Faith, the more Humility.

Keep good Principles, and they will keep you.

Men would first see, and then believe; but they must first believe, and then see.

As Believers live *upon* Christ by Faith, so they live *to* him by Obedience.

Justi-

28 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

Justifying Faith is always attended with universal Obedience.

There is a Difference between contending for the Faith, and babbling for a Fancy.

Affurance sets the Notion of Faith too high, Assent too low.

There is as much Difference between Faith and Assurance, as there is between the Root and the Fruit.

There may be Joy without Faith, and there may be Faith without Joy.

Human Faith is founded upon *Probability*, divine Faith upon *Certainty*.

If the Exercise of Faith be the Care of your Souls, the End of your Faith will be the Salvation of your Souls.

Of HUMILITY.

To be low is the safest and comliest Posture for sinful Creatures.

It is the Creature's Honour to abase himself before the most high God.

God had rather see his Children humble for Sin, than proud of Grace.

If Men did but know themselves more, they would be more humble.

They that are humble, are content and thankful.

An humble Spirit is a charitable and quiet Spirit.

Judge

Judge thyself with a Judgment of Sincerity, and thou wilt judge others with a Judgment of Charity.

To humble ourselves, is the only Way to rise.

Believers must be humble for Sin pardoned, and because it is pardoned.

When *Paul* was a *Pharisee*, he thought he was *blameless*; when he was a *Christian*, the *Chief of Sinners*: Before, *any thing but Christ*; now, *none but Christ*.

If Christ humbled himself to honour our Nature, we should humble ourselves to honour his Name.

Neither all the Devils in Hell, nor all the Temptations of the World, can hurt that Man that keeps himself humble and depending on Christ.

It is no Humiliation to aggravate Sin above Christ's saving Power.

Despair is a Corruption of Humiliation, 'tis a counterfeit Humility, a sullen Pride, the Covert of a hardened Spirit.

That is true Humiliation, which (like a Harbinger) makes Way for Christ, and throws the Soul at his Feet.

Our Saviour was a Preacher and Pattern of Humility: He did so admire it, that he set them in the highest Form, that had the lowest Hearts.

None so high and glorious as Christ, yet none so meek and lowly.

Of

Of CONTENTMENT.

Humility is the Mother of Contentment.

The deeper your Self-Abhorrence, the easier is Self-Resignation.

They that deserve *Nothing* should be content with *any Thing*.

Bless God for what you have, and trust God for what you want.

We must commit our Souls to God's keeping, and submit ourselves to God's disposing.

We should obey his revealed Will, and then be resigned to his providential Will.

If we cannot bring our Condition to our Mind, we must labour to bring our Mind to our Condition.

Neither Contentment nor Discontentment, arises from the outward Condition, but from the inward Disposition.

If a Man is not content in that State he is in, he will not be content in any State he would be in.

Of PRIDE.

To be sure a Man is proud of That which he scorns another for the Want of.

That which a Man envies in another, he would be proud of, if he had it himself.

Pride is founded on *Error* and *Self-Ignorance*.

Some

Some are proud of what they *are*, others of what they *are not*.

There is a fullen Pride in not acknowledging Benefits.

A Man may be poor in Purse, yet proud in Spirit.

There may be Pride in Rags, in a solemn Look and lowly Carriage.

God had rather his People should fare poorly, than live proudly.

How can'st thou be Judge of another's Heart, that dost not know thine own?

As the first Step Heaven-ward is Humility, so the first Step Hell-ward is Pride.

Pride counts the Gospel Foolishness, but the Gospel always shews Pride to be so.

Pride is a Sin that will rise out of the Ashes of other Sins.

Folly is the Beginning of Pride, and Shame shall be the End of it; either *penitent* Shame, or *penal* Shame; either temporal Repentance, or eternal Punishment.

Shall the Sinner be proud that is going to Hell? Shall the Saint be proud that is newly saved from it?

Thou that can'st call nothing thine own but Sin and Shame, art thou proud? Dust and Ashes, proud? A Worm, and proud? Emptiness, and proud? Perishing, and proud?

It is unreasonable for the *Creature* to be proud, much more the *Sinner*.

Of HYPOCRISY.

An Hypocrite is one that neither *is* what he *seems*, nor *seems* what he *is*.

An Hypocrite is the Picture of a Saint; but his Paint shall be washed off, and he shall appear in his own Colours.

God is good in Earnest with us, we ought therefore to be so with him.

An Hypocrite is hated of the World for seeming a Christian, and hated of God for not being one.

Of IDLENESS.

Idleness is the Mother of many wanton Children.

They that do nothing, are in the ready Way to do that which is worse than nothing.

If we hide our Talent in the Earth, we shall lose our Treasure in Heaven.

A Christian should never say, *he hath Nothing to do.*

It was not for Nothing that we were called out of Nothing.

Of the SOUL.

It matters not what a Man loses, if he saves his Soul; but, if he lose his Soul, it matters not what he saves.

They that are least sensible of their Soul's Wants, are most miserable.

'Tis

'Tis our greatest Wisdom to be tenderly watchful over the Frame of our Spirits ; to observe what helps it, and what injures it.

If you lose your Time, you lose your Hopes ; and if you lose your Hopes, you lose your Souls ; and when your Souls are lost, they shall never be ransomed ; when your Hopes are lost, they shall never be recovered ; and when your Time is lost, it shall never be redeemed.

Of the Heart and Conscience.

The soft Mercies of God will break the hard Heart of Man.

An hard Heart is not so soon broken, as a broken Heart is bound up.

It is better to have a good Conscience, and be censured, than to have a bad one, and be flattered.

We must hear the Warnings of Conscience, or we shall feel the Woundings of Conscience.

A Word from God, a Look from Christ, a Touch from the Spirit, will break the Heart.

Of GRACE.

The Notion of Free-Grace may make Persons dissolute, but a Sense of it restrains from Sin.

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The Goodness of God respects our *Emptiness*, the *Grace* of God our *Sinfulness*, and the *Mercy* of God our *Unworthiness*.

What Sin is there, which Grace cannot pardon? What Heart is there, which Grace cannot soften? What Soul is there, which Grace cannot save?

All Grace flows from Christ united to the Soul; as all Life flows from the Soul united to the Body.

The more God's Justice was declared towards his Son, the more was his Mercy magnified towards the Sinner.

God humbled his Son to exalt his Grace.

Saul was not so free in persecuting Christ as Christ was in pardoning *Paul*.

Bless God for Christ, Christ for the Spirit and the Spirit for Grace.

Possibly a Christian's Enemies may spoil him of his common Mercies; but they shall never rob him of his Covenant Mercies.

God's Faithfulness performed what his Mercy promised.

Mercy drew the Covenant; Faithfulness keeps it: Mercy call'd us; Faithfulness will not cast us off.

Common Mercies may be sweet, but Covenant Mercies are sure.

Abusers of Mercy are Treasurers up of Wrath.

If thou wert worthy, thou could'st have no Mercy.

There

There is Grace in the Desire of Grace, as there is Sin in the Desire of Sin.

You that have found Mercy, shew Mercy.

Though God in Mercy hath done great Things for you, yet consider what in Justice he might have done to you.

Whilst we carry a Sense of Grace in our Conscience to comfort us, let us carry a Sense of Sin in our Memory to humble us.

We can never bless God enough for his Patience, that hath kept us so long out of Hell; nor for his Mercy, that so earnestly invites us to Heaven.

All that are chosen, are Vessels of Mercy; all that are regenerate, are Patterns of Mercy; all that are sav'd, are Monuments of Mercy; and the Work of Heaven, is to sing the loud Praises of Mercy.

It melts the Heart to think, that *God is as full of Mercy, as I am of Sin; he is as free to forgive, as I am to offend; he bath daily Mercies for daily Sins.*

The Heart of Man is such a barren Soil, that no Good can grow therein, unless Almighty Grace plant it.

Grace is an immortal Seed, cast into an immortal Soil, that brings forth immortal Fruit.

Of TEMPTATIONS.

Temptations are Instructions.

He is over-wise that goes out of God's Way to escape a Cross.

God will either keep his Saints *from* Temptations by his preventing Mercy, or *in* Temptations by his supporting Mercy, or find a Way for their Escape by his delivering Mercy.

A Christian that lives here among his Enemies, should never stir abroad without his Guard.

Satan tempts to Sin, the *Spirit* counsels against Sin.

If you follow *Satan*, you will find the Tempter prove a Tormentor; if you follow the *Spirit*, you will find the Counsellor prove a Comforter.

Of the WORLD.

If the World be our Portion here, Heav'n will be our Portion hereafter.

We must neither leave the World, nor love it.

The World promises Comforts, and pays Sorrows.

Riches and Prosperity will either kill with Care, or surfeit with Delight.

Be not proud of Riches but afraid of them, lest they be as Silver Bars to cross the Way to Heaven.

We put a Price upon Riches, but Riches cannot put a Price upon us.

We must answer for our Riches, but our Riches cannot answer for us.

Riches are as indifferent Things ; good or bad, as they are used : Be then as indifferent to them, as they are to you.

If there be too great an Affection for any Thing here, there will be an answerable Affection.

'Tis a sad Thing when a Man can have no Comfort but in Diversions, no Joy but in forgetting himself.

Love the Men of the World, but not the Things of the World.

To have a Portion in the World, is a Mercy ; to have the World for a Portion, is a Misery.

Whatever we make an Idol of, will be a Cross to us if we belong to Christ ; a Curse to us if we do not.

We should endeavour to pass through this World with a chearful Indifferency.

Covetousness betray'd our Saviour, Envy accused him, and the Friendship of the World condemned him.

Man is not made for the World, but the World for Man,

38 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

It is our Business in this World, to secure an Interest in the next.

The Things of the World, the more they are known, the less they are admired ; but the Things of God, the more they are known, the more they are admired.

There is no miss of the Creature, where there is a full Enjoyment of the Creator.

If thou art not afraid of the World, I fear thou art a Friend of the World, and an Enemy to God.

As you love your Souls, beware of the World ; it hath slain its Thousands, and ten Thousands. What ruined *Lot's Wife*? the World. What ruined *Judas*? the World. What ruined *Simon Magus*? the World. What ruined *Demas*? the World. And *What shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* *Mat.* xvi. 26.

To speak the Truth freely ; Riches are Dust, Honours are Shadows, Pleasures are Bubbles, and Man a Lump of Vanity, compounded of Sin and Misery.

Of the Word of God.

The Word of God must be nearer to us than our Friends, dearer to us than our Lives, sweeter to us than our Liberty, and pleasanter to us than all earthly Comforts.

Take the Candle of God's Word, and search the Corners of your Heart.

W

We speak to God in Prayer ; God speaks to us in his Word.

Two things are to be trembled at ; the Presence of God which fills all Places, and the Word of God which reacheth to all Times.

All Arguments against the Word of God are Fallacies ; all Conceits against the Word are Delusions ; all Derision against the Word is Folly ; and all Opposition against the Word is Madness.

When God threatens, that's a Time to repent ; when he promises, that's a Time to believe ; when he commands, that's a Time to obey.

If a Man believed the Threatnings of the Word of God, he would tremble, and fly to the Promises for Refuge.

As Christ came out of his Father's Bosom, so the Promises came out of Christ's Side.

The Church cannot live without Faith, and Faith cannot live without the Promises.

We have less Power to stand than our first Parents, but we have better Promises.

Whatever Promises Faith takes hold of, it makes the good Thing there promised to be our own.

God's Promises are a Defence against Man's Threatnings.

40 *Devout and Useful Sayings*

The Promises of the Gospel are sealed to us by the Oath of the Father, the Blood of the Son, and the Witness of the Spirit,

Of the LAW.

The moral Law was weak through the Flesh, the ceremonial Law was so in its own Nature; but Christ was the End of the moral Law to fulfil it, and the End of the ceremonial Law to answer its Intention, by offering himself a Sacrifice.

Christ was God's righteous Servant to perform all the Duties of the moral Law; and our devoted Sacrifice to bear all the Penalties of it.

By the Law is the Knowledge of Sin, by the Gospel is the Knowledge of Christ.

God hath written a Law, and a Gospel; the Law to *bumble* us, and the Gospel to *comfort* us; the Law to *cast us down*, and the Gospel to *raise us up*; the Law to convince us of *our Misery*, and the Gospel to convince us of *his Mercy*; the Law to discover *Sin*, and the Gospel to discover *Grace* and *Christ*.

OF PROVIDENCE.

Providences are sometimes dark Texts that want an Expofitor.

God's Providence fulfils his Promise.

Count every Day, as well as you can, the Providences of God towards you that Day.

Without God's Providence nothing falls out in the World; without his Commission nothing stirs; without his Blessing nothing prospers.

Of AFFLICTIONS.

'Tis a worse Sign to be without Chastisement, than to be under Chastisement.

Two Things should comfort suffering Christians, *viz.* all that they suffer is not Hell; yet it is all the Hell they shall suffer.

Afflictions are not so much *threatned*, as *promised*, to the Children of God.

To be a Christian, and a suffering Christian, is a double Honour.

By Affliction God separates the Sin which he hates, from the Soul which he loves.

The more a Man fears Sin, the less will he fear Trouble.

Afflictions are of God's sending, but of Sins deserving.

Sin is the Poison, Affliction the Physick.

When God is humbling us, let us endeavour to humble ourselves.

May every one do what he will with his own, but God?

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If the Servants of Christ are never so low; yet his Heart is with them, and his Eye upon them.

God takes it unkindly when we grieve too much for any outward Thing; because 'tis a Sign we fetch not that Comfort from him which we should.

Though the Hand of God may be against you; yet, the Heart of God may be towards you.

What if the Providence of God cross you, if the Promise of God bless you?

What is bearing a temporal Cross, to the wearing an eternal Crown?

Our Enjoyments are greater then our Afflictions, and our Afflictions less than our Sins.

Our sufferings should stir up our Graces, as well as our Grievs.

Of P R A Y E R.

Fill up the void Spaces of your Time with Meditation and Prayer.

They are the safest who are most in their Closets; who pray not to be seen of Men, but to be heard of God.

Prayer doth not consist in gifted Expressions, and a Volubility of Speech; but in a Brokenness of Heart.

Imperfect broken Groans, from a broken Heart, God will accept.

An hard Heart cannot pray; a broken Heart is made up of Prayer.

It is a Comfort to Christians apart to think their Prayers meet before a Throne of Grace; and their Persons shall meet before a Throne of Glory.

There wants nothing but a believing Prayer to turn the Promise into a Performance.

God is a *great* God, and therefore he will be *sought*; he is a *good* God, and therefore he will be *found*.

When God pours out his Spirit upon Man, then will Man pour out his Heart before God.

He that lives without Prayer, or prays without Life, hath not the Spirit of God.

Prayer doth not consist in the Elegance of the Phrase, but in the Strength of the Affection.

Where there is a willing Heart, there will be a continual crying to Heaven for Help.

Pray that you may Pray.

Waiting upon God continually will abate your unnecessary Cares, and sweeten your necessary ones.

God counts all the Steps we take to the Throne of Grace, and all the Minutes of our waiting.

Let nothing get between Heaven and Prayer, but Christ.

Prayer,

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Prayer, if it be done as a Task, is no Prayer.

Sin quenches Prayer, Affliction quickens it.

The same Spirit of Faith which teaches a Man to cry earnestly, teaches him to wait patiently: For, as it assures him the Mercy is in the Lord's Hand; so it assures him, it will be given forth in the Lord's Time.

The *Breath* of Prayer comes from the *Life* of Faith.

Whatever you want go to God by Faith and Prayer, in the Name of Christ, and never think his Delays are Denials.

They that spend their Days in Faith and Prayer, shall end their Days in Peace and Comfort.

Of ETERNITY.

Look backwards, and Time was when Souls were not; look forwards, and our Souls will be when Time shall not.

Who would not deny himself for a Time, that he may enjoy himself for ever?

What is the World to them that are in the Grave, where our Bodies must shortly be? Or to them that are in Eternity, where our Souls must shortly be?

Remember you are at the Door of Eternity, and have other Work to do than to trifle away Time; those Hours which you spend in your Closets, are the golden Spots of all
your

your Time, and will have the sweetest Influence upon your last Hours.

Our Life is a Passage to Eternity ; it ought to be a Meditation of Eternity, and a Preparation for Eternity.

Of DEATH.

The longest Life, is a lingering Death.

First Infancy dies, then Childhood, then Youth, then Manhood, then old Age ; and then we make an end of dying.

Though thou may'st have been nearer Death (in thine own Apprehensions) than thou art now ; yet it is certain, Death was never so near to thee as it is now.

Man does not die because he is made of Earth, but because he is infected with Sin.

Death to a Christian, is a putting off Rags for Robes.

We need not be ashamed of that now, which we are sure we shall not repent of when we come to die.

As the King of Terrors leaves us, so the Day of Terror will find us.

Death will be very terrible to him who dies not in his Thoughts daily.

There is nothing terrible in Death, but what our Lives have made so.

'Tis Death to many to think of Death ; they are as unwilling to be led into a Discourse of Death, as Children into the dark : The Thoughts of it are no more welcome

to

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to them, than *Moses* was to *Pharaoh*; to whom he said, *Get thee from me, and let me see thy Face no more*, *Exod. x. 28.*

Death shuts in the Light of this World, and is the Day-break of Eternity.

Let us familiarize Death by Meditation, and sweeten it by Preparation.

The great Comfort of a Believer, on his Death-bed, is Faith in Christ, Hope in the Promise, and an Interest in the Covenant.

This Life is a middle State; we must soon go higher or lower, where we must spend upon the Treasure we here lay up, whether of Wrath or Glory.

We should think of Death, not as though we were thinking, but as though we were dying.

It is the greatest Business of Life, to think of the End of Life, and to lay hold of eternal Life.

Let us make a Friend of Death and our Judge; and then we shall die out of Choice, as well as Necessity.

Of HEAVEN.

If Heaven doth not enter into us by Way of *Holiness*, we shall never enter into Heaven by Way of *Happiness*.

If you would lay up a Treasure of Glory in Heaven, lay up a Treasure of Grace in your Hearts.

If

If your Souls are rich in Grace, they will be rich in Glory.

The more you do for God in this World, the more God will do for you in the World to come.

As Heaven is kept for the Saints by Christ, so they are kept for Heaven by the Spirit.

In Heaven all God's Servants will be abundantly satisfied with his Dealings and Dispensations with them; and shall see how all conducted like so many Winds, to bring them to their Haven; and how, even the roughest Blasts helped to bring them homeward.

In Heaven God will never hide his Face more, nor the Devil shew his more.

How can we expect to live with God in Heaven, if we love not to live with him on Earth?

If thou lovest to worship God here below, God will take thee up to worship him above. Thou shalt change thy Place, but not thine Employment.

Heaven is a Day without a Cloud to darken it, and without a Night to end it.

We would be seated in the heavenly *Canaan*, but are loath to be scratched with the Briers and Thorns of the *Wilderness*.

In Heaven there is the Presence of all Good, and the Absence of all Evil.

Grace and Glory differ but as the Bud and the Blossom: What is Grace but Glo-
ry

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ry begun? What is Glory, but Grace perfected?

We may hope for a Place in Heaven, if our Hearts are made suitable to the State of Heaven.

If there will be any Grief in Heaven, sure it will be for this, that we have done no more for God on Earth.

Of HELL.

They that will not fear the Punishment in the Threatning, shall feel the Threatning in the Punishment.

In Heaven Holiness is their everlasting Temper, and Happiness their everlasting Portion; in Hell Sin is their eternal Temper, and Sorrow their eternal Portion.

The Reason why so many fall into Hell, is because so few think of it.

They fall *deepest* into Hell, that fall *backward* into Hell.

None are so near Heaven, as they that are convinc'd; none so near Hell, as those who have quench'd Conviction.

The Scorners's Seat stands next Hell Gate.

We must fall into the Arms of Christ, or into the Flames of Hell.

You may think it a sad Thing to repent on Earth, but it is a sadder Thing to repent in Hell.

A Creature's

A Creature's Place is a low Place, but a Sinner's Place is a lower.

'Tis a weak and wretched Thing, by false Peace, to secure eternal Sorrow.

C H A P. II.

Containing some religious Observations by Way of Simile.

AS Rivers and Fountains proceed from the Sea, and return thither again ; so true Grace in the Heart, as a Fountain, sends forth all its Streams towards God, the Ocean from whence it flowed.

Christian Graces are like Perfumes ; the more they are prest, the sweeter they smell ; like Stars, that shine brightest in the dark ; like Trees, the more they are shaken, the deeper Root they take, and the more Fruit they bear.

As Snow is of itself cold, yet warms and refreshes the Earth ; so Afflictions, though in themselves grievous, yet keep the Soul of the Christian warm, and make it fruitful.

The casting down of our Spirits in true Humility, is but like throwing a Ball on the
E Ground,

Ground, which makes it rebound the higher towards Heaven.

As worldly Joy ends in Sorrows, so godly Sorrow ends in Joy.

As it sometimes rains when the Sun shines ; so there may be Joy in a Saint's Heart when there are Tears in his Eyes.

Confession of Sin should come like Water from a Spring, that runs freely ; and not like Water from a Still, that is forced by the Fire of Affliction.

As the Way to stop Bleeding, is by opening a Vein , so the Way to stop unreasonable Sorrow is to turn it against Sin.

Sin is like a Bee, with Honey in its Mouth, but a Sting in its Tail.

Many a Man shifts his Sins as Men do their Cloaths ; they put off one to put on another : This is but waiting upon the Devil in a new Livery.

The Sins of a good Man are like Weeds in a Garden, which may hinder the Growth of Fruits and Flowers, but (not permitted to get Head) cannot kill them.

The Pleasure of Sin is like a Draught of sweet Poison.

As the Fly, that plays about the Candle, doth often burn its Wings at last ; so the Christian, that parleys with Temptations, is in danger of having the Wings of his Soul so shorten'd by the fiery Darts of the Devil,

Devil, that he will not be able to rise again towards Heaven, 'till God shall give him renewed Affections.

As *Noah's* Dove could find no Rest for the Sole of her Foot; so the Spirit of God can find no Residence in that Heart that is delug'd in Sin.

Our Conscience is as a Fire within us, our Sins as the Fewel; therefore, instead of warming, it will scorch us; unless the Fuel be removed, or the Heat of it allay'd by penitential Tears.

All true Christians must be like *Noah's* Ark, that was pitched within and without, *Gen. vi. 14.* They must have a holy Inside, and a holy Outside; their Profession and Practice must agree together.

They that are Professors only, and make shew of Religion for sinister Ends, are like *Orpah*; in Times of Affliction they will kiss their Mother and be gone; they will soon take leave of the Church of God. But they that are true Christians are like *Ruth*; they will cleave to her, stay by her, live and die with her, and never depart from her, *Ruth i. 14.*

As it is not putting on a Gown that makes a Scholar, but the inward Habits of the Mind; so it is not putting on an outward Cloak of Profession that makes a Christian, but the inward Grace of the Heart.

As *Noah's Dove* found no footing but in the Ark ; so a Christian finds no Contentment but in Christ.

Our Hearts are like Instruments of Music well tun'd ; they will make no Melody in the Ear of God, unless they be gently touch'd by the Finger of the Spirit.

Christians Hearts are as Iron ; If they be once made hot with the Love of God, they will more easily be joined together in Love to one another.

As the Sun ripens and sweetens Fruits by shining upon them, without which they would be sour and unsavory ; so it is the Sunshine of God's Love and Favour that sweetens all earthly Blessings, without which they would be but Crosses and Curses to them that possess them.

God's Mercies are as Cords to draw us to him ; but our Sins are as sharp Swords that cut those Cords.

Outward Comforts are like the rotten Twigs of a Tree ; they may be touched, but if they are trusted to, or rested upon, they will certainly deceive and fail us.

As Cankers breed in the sweetest Roses, so Pride may arise out of the sweetest Duties.

A zealous Soul without Meekness, is like a Ship in a Storm, in danger of Wrecks. A meek Soul without Zeal, is like a Ship in a Calm,

Calm, that moves not so fast to its Harbour as it ought.

Notional Knowledge is like the Light of a Candle, which enlightens, but does not warm; true and saving Knowledge is like the Sun, which not only enlightens but enlivens.

As God commanded under the Law, that the Inwards of every Sacrifice should be burnt, that they might be an Offering made by Fire, of sweet Savour, unto the Lord, Levit. iv. 8. So he looks for no less now; For, unless we offer up our Hearts to him on the Altar of Christ's Merits with the Fire of Zeal, our Duties will never be acceptable to him.

As *Old-Testament* Saints had Sacrifices under the Law; so *New-Testament* Saints have under the Gospel: For every Duty in which Saints consecrate themselves, is called a Sacrifice, Psalm iv. 5. cxvi. 17. Heb. xiii. 16. And we may parallel Law and Gospel Sacrifices thus, Repentance is a *Trespass-offering*, Zeal a *Burnt-offering*, Praise a *Free-will-offering*, and Sincerity the *Oblations of unleavened Bread*.

As every Shred of Gold is precious, so is every Minute of Time.

As it would be great Folly to shoe Horses (as Nero did) with Gold; so it would be, to spend Time in Trifles.

54 *Religious Observations, &c.*

A Christian's Birth is like the *Red-Sea*, that brings him into the Wilderness; his Death is like *Jordan*, that brings him into *Canaan*.

As the Waters that sunk the Men of the old World, raised up *Noah* in the Ark; so Death which sinks Sinners into Hell, raises Saints up to Heaven.

As a *Basilisk*, if it sees a Man first, kills him, but, if a Man sees it first, it doth him no harm; so, if we see Death first, and prepare for it, we unstring it, and it can do us no hurt.

As Lamps fed with sweet Oil, cast a sweeter Smell when they are put out; so after Death, the Memory of the Righteous is precious.

A wicked Man is like one that hangs over a deep Pit by a slender Cord with one Hand, and is cutting it with the other.

C H A P. III.

Containing serious Advice to Youth.

PART I.

I. **C**HUSE God for your Portion; remember that he is the only Happiness of a Rational and Immortal Soul. The Soul that was made for God can find no Happiness but in God: It came from God, and can never be Happy but by returning to him again, and resting in him, *Mic. ii. 10. Arise, for this is not your Rest. Col. iii. 1, 2, 3. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right Hand of God: Set your Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth: For ye are Dead, and your Life is hid with Christ in God.*

God is All-sufficient; get him for your Portion and you have all: Then you have infinite Wisdom to direct you, infinite Knowledge to teach you, infinite Mercy to pity and save you, infinite Love to care for and comfort you, and infinite Power to protect and keep you. If God be yours, all his Attributes are yours; all his Creatures, all his Works of Providence, shall do you good, as you have need of them. He is an eternal, full, satisfactory Portion. He is an ever-li-

ving, ever-loving, ever-present Friend ; and without him you are a cursed Creature in every Condition, and all Things will work against you.

II. Consider, that by Nature you are dead in Trespases and Sins ; a Child of Wrath, a Stranger, and Enemy to God ; and while such, the Thoughts of God are terrible to you ; you can expect nothing from him but Wrath and everlasting Burnings. God is ever angry with the Wicked : His Holiness hates all Sin ; his all-seeing Eye beholds it, and his Justice will punish it.

While you are in a State of Nature you can do nothing but sin, *Gen. vi. 5. Matth. vii. 18.* Every Thing is a Snare, and a wicked Heart is apt to be taken. Labour to be sensible of this, and let the Sinfulness of your Nature be your greatest Burden. Strive and labour against this principally. Get Purity of Heart, and a holy Life will follow upon it ; but if you strive only against outward Acts of Sin, while your Heart is let alone, your Labour will be in vain, your Heart will tire you out ; or if it doth not, yet remember, that God's Eye is in the Heart, and he hath provided a Hell for Hypocrites. Nothing more damnable than a wicked unrenewed Heart.

III. Consider, that Christ alone is your Way to God. Justification, Pardon, and Acceptance with God, is by Faith in him alone. Sanctification, and a new Nature, is by the Power

Power of his Spirit alone. Let Christ therefore be precious to your Soul. Labour for true Faith in him. Take him for your Lord and Saviour; submit to his Commands in all Things; and rest your Soul upon him alone for Reconciliation and Peace with God. Open your Heart to the Motions of his Spirit; welcome that Principle of a holy and divine Life, and be sure to improve his Motions, follow his Drawings, and by no means grieve him.

IV. Be speedy in your Repentance, and diligent in your Endeavours after Holiness. Know the Time of God's gracious Visitation. While God is calling, Christ inviting, the Gate of Heaven set open, the Ministers of the Word exhorting, and the Spirit drawing, make haste and delay not.

Consider your Life is but short, and altogether uncertain. To defer one Day may be to your everlasting Undoing. When your Life is once gone it will be in vain to think of Repenting. You shall then have no more Sermons, no more Offers of Christ and Grace, *Heb. ix. 27.* God will be patient no more. And if God should take away your Life to Morrow, you would perish inexcusably for refusing his Grace to Day. One Offer of Grace refus'd renders a Sinner inexcusable, though God should never offer his Mercy more. O, trifle not with your Soul! Be not careless of eternal Happiness. You have Heaven and Hell, Life and Death before you, and it depends

pend upon your own hearty Choice which shall be your Portion: And they are chosen by the Choice of the Way which leads to them. Chuse Life, and chuse it speedily. And remember once again, that you have but one Life to chuse in. Trifle not away this Moment, upon which depends Eternity, Mispend not your short Time to your eternal Loss.

Stand not upon a short Labour, Difficulty, Self-denial, or Suffering, for your eternal Happiness. God would have you sav'd; Christ hath died for you to reconcile you to God; he is ascended into Heaven to open a Door for your Soul to enter in at, and he is interceding with the Father for all Grace and Mercy for you, if you refuse him not. He came into the World to *seek and to save that which is lost*, Luke xix. 10. Be sensible of your sinful, lost damnable Condition without him. O! make haste to your Saviour, yield to all his Demands, and take him as offered in the Gospel, in all his Offices.

V. Endeavour to be truly and thoroughly Religious, and be not discouraged at the Difficulties of it. God's Grace shall be sufficient for your Help; his Promises shall be your sweet Encouragement; Peace of Conscience, and Communion with God, shall be your ever present Cordials. The Trouble and Pains of Religion shall be but short, and your Reward shall be glorious and eternal. Re-
member

member that of the Apostle, when Religion calls you to Self-denial and Sufferings, *Our light Afflictions that are but for a Moment shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. *If we suffer with Christ we shall also reign with him*, 2 Tim. ii. 12. *And the Sufferings of this present Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed*, Rom. viii. 18. See also, *Isa. xliii. 2, 3. When thou passest through the Waters I will be with thee; and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the Fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the holy One of Israel thy Saviour.* Never are we more joyful than when we deny our Joy for Christ's Sake! And if these Arguments will not prevail, then consider, that all the Pains and Difficulties of Religion will be found in the End far more tolerable than Hell.

VI. Devote your young Years to a good God, and your loving Saviour. The first Fruits are to be offered to him. The green Ears of your Youth are to be carried to his Sanctuary. Think it not pity that the vain Delights and sinful Pleasures of Youth should be lost: You shall but exchange them for spiritual Delights, which are far more excellent, inward and lasting. The Joy of the Holy Ghost, the Rejoicing of a good Conscience, Communion with God, the
Sense

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Sense of his Love, and the Hope of Heaven, are far better than the Pleasures of Sin, and will more than recompense your Loss of youthful and carnal Delights. And consider this seriously, that none have usually more Comfort in their Souls than those, who are willing to lose their sinful Comforts for God and their Soul's Sake.

Remember that you must give an Account to God how you spend your Youth, as well as for old Age. Consider, as young as you are, how many Years are already spent; and what Account you are able to give to God of them. One Day spent in Sin is too much; and the Sins of one Hour deserve a Hell. Younger than you are dead and gone. Let the Thoughts of them mind you seriously of your Account. Your Call to God's Bar may be next. Are you ready? Think often what Expenditure of Time may be best accounted for to God; and so spend your younger Days, as you will wish you had spent them when you come to die and be judged.

Suppose God should call you away suddenly, what Sentence could you expect from him? Are you ready, if the Bridegroom should now come? *Matth. xxv. 6.* It will be no Excuse at Judgment, if you be found in your Sins, to say, *Lord, I was but young.* He that is old enough to sin is old enough for Hell. You cannot make sure of God's Love, and an Interest in Christ

too soon. You cannot secure your Soul too soon.

Consider those young Ones in Scripture who are commended for their early Piety. *Samuel* was ministring to God in his Childhood, 1 *Sam.* ii. 18. *Josiah* had a tender Heart for God in his tender Years, 2 *Kings* xxii. 19. *Children* sang Hosannas to Christ, *Matth.* xxi. 15. *Timothy* was a Saint betimes, 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. And let these young Ones be your Pattern.

The young Disciple was the loved Disciple. God takes great Delight in an early Convert. All your Life is due to God, let him therefore have all that still remains, and beg his Pardon that any of it hath been deny'd.

Repentance is easiest in Youth. Sin is less rooted, Satan not so fortify'd, Grace not so much flighted, the Spirit not so much grieved, and the Conscience not so much hardened.

Be sure therefore to give God your Youth. Resolve now to be seriously religious. Now beg for the Pardon of your Sins, and the Spirit of Holiness; and though the generality of Youth take another Course, yet be not sway'd by the Multitude, and carried down the Stream towards Hell; let them go, you shall have better Company. The Saints of God will love you, the Angels of God will guard you, and the Presence of God himself shall be with you.

And

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And if you find yourself still inclin'd to be as the most are, and to do as the most do, consider, that you cannot have that Pleasure in Sin which others may. You have had a good Education, and good Instructions; your Conscience hath been more awaken'd, and will not suffer you to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, as others, who are more ignorant, and worse educated, may. Conscience will mix Gall with your Honey; when you go to Prayer, in the Evening, upon your Bed, when alone and retired, or in the Dark, it will read sad Lectures to you, and make you review your past Delights with Bitterness.

Labour therefore to approve yourself to God in Youth; and though others may condemn you, yet God (from whose Mouth only you must live or die) will acquit and justify you.

And as a Conclusion of this Advice, let me persuade you to consider, that a forsaking of Sin, when you are most capable of Pleasure or Honour by it, and a turning to God when you are most capable of enjoying the World, will clearly evidence the Truth of your Conversion. So that a timely Conversion to God in Youth, as it is most easy, so it is least questionable; for it now appears that God is loved for himself, and Christ is preferr'd above the Flesh, and Grace above the sweetest Delights of the World.

PART II.

I. Make the Word of God the Rule of all you do.

II. Whatever you do, be sure to do it in the Strength of Christ. *Without me* (saith Christ) *ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. *i. e.* nothing well, nothing that is acceptable to God. If you do not bear Fruit as a Branch in Christ, your Fruit will be but bad, and unfavoury in God's Account; and you cannot bear Fruit, as a Branch in Christ, unless all your Sap and fructifying Power be drawn from him by an active Faith. *Paul could do all Things through Christ that strengthen'd him*, Phil. vi. 13. He could bear the Devil's Buf-fetings by *sufficient Grace* from Christ, 2 Cor. xii. 9. But, of himself, he could not so much as think a good Thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Nature is but a dry Root of Goodness; no gracious Actions spring from thence. Grace depends upon continual Supplies that flow from Christ, as Sap from the Root, or Beams from the Sun. If Christ withdraws, your Grace presently languishes, grows faint and unactive. Know therefore, and mind it before you go to work, from whence your Strength must come, and fetch it in by Faith. Without this Practice you shall fall in small Temptations, and with it stand in great ones. *Be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*, and nothing shall be too hard for you,

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you. Mountains shall be Plains, and Vallies filled up. All things shall be possible to him that believes, and relies upon that Power to which nothing is impossible.

III. As you are to act in the Power of Christ, so you are to present your Duties to God in the Name of Christ, *Col. iii. 17.* Your most costly Sacrifices are but unfavoury in the Nostrils of a holy God, if they be not perfumed by the fragrant Incense of his Intercession: Your fairest Righteousness but as filthy Rags, if his Righteousness doth not cover it: Your Duties must be dyed in the Blood of Christ, they must be enriched with his precious Merits, or they will be too mean for God to look upon, unless with Indignation. *In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength, Isa. xlv. 24.*

IV. Whatever you do, *do all to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31.* The best Action is ill done, if not for a good End; and no End is religiously Good without this. That Duty that does not begin and end in God, is no Part of Godliness. Look therefore to your End, and never satisfy yourself that you have done much, unless you have done it well.

It is the Design of the Gospel to take Man wholly off himself, and cast him wholly upon God and Christ. All Idols must be cast down, that God alone may be exalted. Self-emptiness and God's Fulness, Self-deficiency and Christ's Sufficiency, Self-unrighteousness

ousness and Christ's Righteousness, are the great Convictions of the Gospel; and to make Self nothing, and God all in Point of Wisdom, Strength, Righteousness and Glory, is the great Command and Duty of it.

And by these Things examine all you do: By whose Rule have I acted? By whose Strength have I acted? In whose Name have I acted? And for whose Glory have I acted? What Faith, what Humility, what Self-denial, what Love of God and Christ, hath there been in all my Actions?

These are general Rules of Action.

V. Endeavour to make every Day the Lord's to spend it well, and to get nearer Heaven by it.

And to this End accept kindly of this Advice.

1. As soon as ever you awake in the Morning lift up your Heart to God, and open it to him. As much as possibly you can, avoid all Thoughts about the World until your Morning Devotions are over. For you will find by Experience that, if the World gives your Soul the first Salute, and be embraced with Kindness in your Morning Affections, it will greatly deaden your Heart in the Morning Duties.

2. As soon as you are up, present your Desires to God, in the Name of Christ, for
F what-

whatever your Soul feels the want of, and give God his due Praises for his Mercies towards you the Night past. Thus *David*, Psal. v. 3. *My Voice shalt thou hear in the Morning, O Lord; in the Morning will I direct my Prayer unto thee.* And for Thanksgiving, Psal. xcii. 1, 2. *It is a good Thing to give Thanks unto thee, O Lord-----to shew forth thy loving Kindness in the Morning.*

3. Let no Day go without reading some Portion of the Scriptures: And it is no great Matter, whether you read it before you pray in the Morning, or just after; your own Inclination and Experience will direct you; but be sure it be done. You will find it very profitable to begin the Day with such a Converse with God. *Prov. vi. 22, 23. When thou wakest it shall talk with thee.* See *John v. 39.* the Command of Christ; and *Joshua i. 8.* the Command of God, with a Promise.

The Scripture discovers Sin, and the Devil's Devices and Malice; it discovers Duty, and the Love of God and Christ; and it discovers your Strength and Encouragements: There are the Promises of assisting and crowning Grace. By these, the Spirit acts, the Devil is conquered, and the Soul is comforted. Through these, the Eye of Faith can see the Love of Christ, the Grace of God, and the Glory of Heaven. In these are the Food, the Physick, and the Arms of the

the Christian's Soul. These are the Word of Reconciliation, Grace and Truth, and the Power of God to Salvation: Therefore, every Day look into these, praying for the Spirit's Teachings, and mixing Faith with what you read.

4. Let all your ordinary or worldly Business of the Day be done with Integrity of Heart, and a Respect to God, whose Servant you ought to be in all Things. *Psal. lxxviii. 72.* Do all Things as to the Lord, as in his Eye, and according to his Will; and your whole Day's Work will be as it were a religious Worship: This Respect will make all holy.

5. Have a Care every Day that nothing put you into a Passion: Do nothing with an over Eagerneſs of Mind; and be ever upon your Guard againſt ſudden Accidents. And this can never be obtained but by committing yourſelf, and your Affairs, into God's Hand and Care every Day; believing that he governs all Things wiſely, and will ever do that which is beſt for you.

The Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs of divine Providence, muſt every Day be believed by him that would live every Day in Peace and Tranquillity of Soul.

6. Every Evening to your Prayers again, and to your Praises for that Day's Mercies: The *Jews* were appointed their Evening Sacrifices,

crifices, as well as Morning, *Exod.* xxx. 7, 8. Twice a Day is as little as can be allowed to those who are commanded to pray continually, *Phil.* iv. 6. *Theff.* v. 17. And every Prayer should have its Praises in it, *Psal.* xcii. 1, 2. *It is good to give Thanks unto the Lord-----to shew forth his Faithfulness every Night.* A Child will ask his earthly Father's Blessing at Morning and Night; and it is better Manners, and to better Purpose, to ask our heavenly Father's Blessing as often. We are ever in want, and God is ever giving; Prayers therefore, and Praises, are ever suitable and becoming.

Let no Day go without Observation, and Review of God's Carriage towards you, and of yours towards him; of Mercies and Afflictions; and of your Duties, and the Frame of Heart in them; of your Sins or Inclinations to Sin; and so likewise of any special or remarkable Providence of God related to you by others, or seen or read of by yourself. And let God have the Glory of what is good. In Afflictions be humble, be ashamed and grieved for Sins; and consider what God's *special* Providences speak to you.

C H A P. IV.

Containing some Occasional Reflections, Directions, Means and Signs of Grace, &c.

Proper Reflections for poor Saints.

OUTWARD good Things are no Sign of God's special Love. The Sun of Prosperity shines upon the Brambles of the Wilderness, as well as upon the Flowers of the Garden; and the Snow of Affliction falls upon the Garden as well as upon the Wilderness.

What though the Streams of Creature Comforts run low with thee, so thou hast the more from the Spring-head? There is more Comfort in one Drop that distils immediately from God, than from ten Thousand Rivers that flow from Creature Delights.

God doth sometimes on purpose shew us the Creatures Emptiness, that we may go to his Fulness. He makes us see the Creatures to be broken Cisterns, that we may know him to be the Fountain: And that we may feed more largely upon spiritual Dainties, he may deny us carnal ones.

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What though God deny thee the earthly Jewel, if he gives thee the heavenly Crown? -----If thou hast no Portion here thou shalt have a Kingdom hereafter; and God is thy Portion here, and so long thou shalt not want any good Thing. Creature Comforts at the best, and to the best, are only delightful, not satisfying; pleasant, not gainful!

What if all thy Friends forsake thee, so long as God (who is better than all) stand by thee? ---- Whatever Enjoyment Friends afford, that God does much more. Do they love thee? He died for thee. Do they pity thee in thine Afflictions? In all *thy Afflictions he is afflicted*, Isa. lxiii. 9. --- What wouldst thou have a Friend for? For Converse? O taste and see how good and pleasant a Thing it is to have Communion with God! Hear (if thou canst, and not be ravish'd) the sweet Voice, *I am thine and thou art mine*. O! feel the Pantings of his Heart, and hear the Soundings of his Bowels! -----Wouldst thou have a Friend to pour out thy Breast into? ---- O! who is so fit for that as God? He will bear part of thy Burden if thou art laden, or he will add new Strength to sustain it. ---- His Love, his Converse, his Society, is Life itself; and such a Life as is made up of nothing but Sweetness and Delight.

The

The Mystery of a Christian.

1. He lives in another, *Gal. ii. 20.* He is Wise in another, *1 Cor. i. 30.* He is Righteous in another, *Rom. x. 4.* He is Strong in another, *Isa. xlv. 24.*

2. He is very low in Humility, but very high in Hope. He knows he is undeserving of the least Mercy, yet expects the greatest, *Gen. xxxii. 10, 12.*

3. He is *in* the World, but not *of* the World, *John xv. 9.* In the World as a *Pilgrim*, but not as a *Citizen*. His Habitation is below, but his Conversation above.

4. He is *Meek*, but *Vehement*; Meek in his own Cause, yet Vehement in the Cause of God. (As *Moses*, who was dead to Affronts, deaf to Reproaches, and blind to Injuries.) He will comply with any Thing that is civil, but with nothing that is sinful. He will stoop to the Necessities of the Meanest, but will not yield to the sinful Humours of the Greatest.

5. He *works out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, yet believes in Christ without Fear and Trembling, *Phil. ii. 12, 13.* He does much for God, yet counts himself an unprofitable Servant. He works as if he was to live here always, yet worships as if he was to die To-morrow.

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6. When *he is weak then is he strong*, 2 Cor. xii. 10. When he is most sensible of his own Weakness, and most dependent on Christ's Strength, then he stands the safest.

7. When he is most vile in his own Eyes he is most glorious in the Eyes of God. When *Job* abhorred himself then God rais'd him, *Job* xlii. 6. When the Centurion thought himself the most unworthy, Christ said, *I have not found so great Faith, no not in Israel*, *Matth.* viii. 8, 10.

8. He is content with his Condition, yet longs and prays for a better, 2 Cor. v. 4.

6. His Losses are Gains; (as *Job's*, *Job* xlii. 12.) His Falls are Risings; (as *Peter's*, *Job* xxi. 17.) His Afflictions are Promotions; (as *Jacob's*, *All those Things are against me*, saith he, *Gen.* xlii. 36. yet all those Things were for him.) His Disappointments are Preferments; (as *Moses's*; though he did not go to *Canaan*, as he desir'd; yet he went to Heaven, which was better, *Deut.* xxxiv. 4, 5.)

10. He cannot sin, 1 *John* iii. 9. yet he cannot *but* sin, 1 *John* i. 8. He cannot sin *habitually*, and with full consent of Will; yet he cannot but sin *actually* through Weakness.

11. He saith, *O wretched Man that I am, Who shall deliver me?* Rom. vii. 24. Yet he saith, *O blessed Man that I am, Who shall condemn me?* Rom. viii. 34.

12. He grieves, yet rejoices under the Strokes of his heavenly Father's Hands. He grieves

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grieves that his Father's Hand strikes him, yet rejoices that it is the Hand of a Father, *Heb. xii. 6, 7.*

13. He knows there is no absolute Perfection in this Life, yet is continually reaching after it, *Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.*

14. The less his Burden grows the more he feels it. The less Sin he hath the more sensible he is of Sin; not that Sin grows, but Light, Holiness, and Tenderneſs is increas'd, *1 Tim. i. 15.*

15. He is content to live, yet willing to die. He deſires to ſerve Chriſt here, yet deſires more to depart, and to be with him in Heaven, *Phil. i. 23.*

Some Doubts and Fears of a tender Conſcience answer'd.

1. I fear Chriſt is not willing to ſave me.

Anſw. What is this but limiting, or ſetting Bounds to infinite Mercy? --- What greater Signs of his Willingneſs would you have than thoſe he hath already given you? He hath died, and purchaſed Salvation for you, *Heb. ii. 9.* *1 John ii. 2.* He calls and intreats you to come and accept of it, *Matth. xi. 28.* He ſaith he will not caſt you out, *John vi. 37.* He complains that you will not come, *John v. 40.* --- And wilt thou yet ſay, he is not willing? --- *If thou art willing, he never was otherwiſe.* --- *Be of good Comfort, he calleth thee.* *Iſa. lv. 1.* *Ho! every one that*
thirſt-

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thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that bath no Money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price. ----- Bring only yourself, come out of need, as all do; as the Prodigal did.

2. But I am so unworthy----

Ans. If you would have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but Hell. What was *Abraham*, or *Saul*, or any, worthy of, before the Lord called them? Say not, *I am unworthy*. Art thou willing? *Rev. xxii. 17. Whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.*

3. But my Sins are very great; and I am confounded at the Sight of them. Alas! how can I think of a Pardon?---

Ans. Are thy Sins great? the more need thou hast of a Saviour. Greater Sinners have been pardoned, *Manasseh* and *Saul*.-----But dost thou think thou art more guilty than Christ is gracious? read *Isa. i. 18. Come and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as Scarlet they shall be as white as Snow, though they be red like Crimson they shall be as Wool.* 1 John i. 7. *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.* Bless God for that Word *All*.

4. But I have a proud, hard, dead Heart.

Ans. Put *that* among your Sins, and come to Christ.

5. My

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5. My Sins are many as well as great. I sin daily ; I so sin that I must suffer.

Ans. Yea, if there were none to appear for thee. *Luke vii. 47. Her Sins which were many are forgiven her. 1 John i. 7. Christ is a daily Advocate. 1 John ii. 1, 2. If any Man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins. This Scripture should be as daily Bread for Believers to live upon.*

6. I have sinn'd against Light and Conviction.

Ans. So did *David* and *Peter*, who yet were pardon'd.

7. But I am a Revolter and Backslider.

Ans. *Jer. iii. 1.---Thou hast played the Harlot with many Lovers, yet return again unto me, saith the Lord. Hos. xiv. 4. I will heal their Backslidings, I will love them freely.*

8. I am afraid of departing from God again.

Ans. *Jer. xxxii. 40.----I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my Fear into their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

9. I have no Strength.

Ans. *Isa. xlv. 24. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength.*

10. I am afraid to die.

Ans. *Psal. xxiii. 4. Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will*

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will fear no Evil, for thou art with me. Phil. i. 23. *I am in a Strait between two, having a Desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*----When you die God shall be with you ; and Christ shall be with you ; and you shall be with God and Christ for ever.

The Difference between Inherent and Imputed Righteousness.

1. Inherent Righteousness sanctifies, imputed Righteousness justifies.

2. Inherent Righteousness makes us shine before Men, imputed Righteousness makes us shine before God.

3. Inherent Righteousness pleases God, imputed Righteousness appeases him.

4. Inherent Righteousness discharges from Hypocrisy, imputed Righteousness from Guilt.

5. Inherent Righteousness makes us pray, imputed Righteousness makes our Prayers prevail.

6. Inherent Righteousness is our Sincerity, imputed Righteousness our Perfection.

7. Inherent Righteousness respects the Law, imputed Righteousness answers the Law.

8. Inherent Righteousness is the Evidence of our Salvation, imputed Righteousness the Foundation of it.

9. Inherent Righteousness is our Joy, imputed Righteousness our Glory, *Isa.* xlv. 25.

10. Inherent Righteousness is to be loved, imputed Righteousness to be trusted.

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11. Inherent Righteousness is imperfect, imputed Righteousness perfect.

12. Inherent Righteousness is our Qualification for Heaven, imputed Righteousness our Title to it.

Directions for those that are under Convictions of Conscience.

1. Don't presume, you are not yet come to the heavenly *Canaan*.

2. Don't despair, you are in the Way to it.

3. Beware of ill Company.

4. Fear falling away, *Heb. iv. 1*. Preserve a tender Frame.

5. Keep up Prayer. Be much in Ejaculations.

6. Don't rest in Convictions, nor Duties, nor any Thing short of Christ.

7. Be much in Humiliation and Confession.

8. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

9. Study your Soul's Case, and labour to get your Hearts affected with it, and mortified to the World.

10. Remember the great Day of Accounts, *Eccl. xii. 14*.

11. Prepare for, and think not strange of Trials, *Heb. x. 32*.

12. Let not Religion be your *Diversion*, but your *Business*.

Directions

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Directions to keep from Sin.

1. Run not into Temptations.
2. Maintain a constant Watch against, and Fear of Sin.
3. Beware of Pride and Presumption.
4. Avoid and abhor Slothfulness.
5. Remember you stand by Faith. Your Strength is in Christ, look to him for it.

Means to gain Repentance.

1. Sit with Care, Constancy, and Conscience, under the Word of Truth and Gospel of Grace.
2. Study the Nature of God.
3. Sit loose to the World.
4. Consider the Shortness of Life, and the Limitation of the Day of Grace.
5. Be much in the Business of Self-Examination, *Psal. iv. 4. Stand in awe and sin not, Commune with your own Heart upon your Bed, and be still. Lam. iii. 40. Let us search and try our Hearts, and turn again unto the Lord.*
6. Seriously expect approaching Judgment.
7. Think much of Death and Eternity.
8. Wash thy Heart in the Blood of Jesus, and take every Day a turn on Mount Calvary.
9. Seriously apprehend the Possibility, nay, the Probability; nay, the absolute Certainty of a Pardon through Christ.
10. Sue for Repentance at the Hand of God: Say with *Ephraim, Turn thou me and*

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I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God, Jer. xxxi. 18.

Means to live at Peace.

1. Mind your own Business, *1 Thess. iv. 11.*
2. Keep your Tongue from Evil, *1. Pet. iii. 10.*
3. Don't contend for every Trifle, whether it be Matter of Right or Opinion.
4. If others neglect their Duty to you, be sure that you perform yours to them. To render Railing for Railing, is to return Sin for Sin.
5. Make your Enemy see and feel your Love to him, *Rom. xii. 20.*
6. Beg of God for universal Charity.
7. Be humble.
8. By Faith wait for the Providence of God.

Means to be content.

1. Consider you have what God allots you ; what his Providence allows you. Your Crosses and Comforts are mix'd by his Hands. It is the Will of God that thou shouldst be thus and thus. Labour then to have that dearer to thee than any Thing in the World.

2. Consider, that if you had fewer Comforts, and more Crosses, you ought to be thankful ; for do you know what you have deserv'd ? 'Tis of the Lord's Mercy that you are not consumed.

3. What-

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3. Whatever comes, take it as from the Hand of God. Assure yourself, that without his Permission and Direction it could not come.

4. Prepare to receive the Will of God, and look for Changes and Alterations in the World.

5. Faith is another Means to quiet, satisfy, and content the Mind. *That* assures us, that that which is consistent with the Love of God may well be borne. Outward Losses and Afflictions are consistent with the Love of God. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth*, Heb. xii. 6. We are all subject to Alterations; our Life, Health, Estate, Friends, Families, and all we have, are liable to Changes. Let us then fix upon a God that never changes, that never fails, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Let us depend upon a God that depends upon none. And, what though our House be not so with God as it hath been; yet, if he hath made with us an everlasting Covenant, we have great reason to be content with all his outward Dealings with us, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Means to preserve Mercies.

1. Be thankful for them.
 2. Receive them as Mercies, not as Dues.
 3. Prepare to part with them.
 4. Expect the Continuance of Mercies from God; he is the Strength of our Life,
- the

the Staff of our Bread, the Breath of our Nostrils, and the Length of our Days.

Signs of Sincerity.

1. Prayer is a Sign of Sincerity ; if it be secret, *Matth.* vi. 6. Frequent, *Acts* x. 2. Fervent, *Rom.* viii. 26.

2. A Willingness to be searched by God, *Psal.* cxxxix. 23. By the Righteous, *Psal.* cxli. 5. By Ministers, *Acts* x. 33. By Conscience, *Psal.* lxxvii. 6. By the Scriptures, *John* iii. 19, 20, 21. Sincere Souls love sincere Dealings.

3. A Sense of Sin ; particularly of spiritual Sins, *Mark* ix. 24. *Rom.* vii. 21. And of original Sin, *Rom.* vii. 24. especially when it drives to Christ, *ver.* 25.

4. When a Man is most sensible of, and watchful against his own Sin, his constitutional Sin, *the Beam in his own Eye.*

5. Universal Tendernefs. When a Man will not plead for any Sin, *Psal.* cxix. 128. nor quarrel with any of the Commandments, *Psal.* cxix. 6. *Acts* ix. 6.

6. 'Tis a Sign of Sincerity when a Man chuses Affliction rather than Sin, *Dan.* iii. 17, 18.

7. When a Man relies upon Christ for Strength against Sin.

8. When a Man loves God above all, and loves others principally for what is God-like in them.

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9. When a Man delights in the Word of God.

10. When he makes Conscience to watch his Heart in Duty.

11. When a Man's Thoughts run freely on heavenly Things.

12. When the Glory of God is preferred above all.

13. When a Man's Profession is join'd with Meekness.

14. A well governed Tongue (for an outward Sign) when a Man dares neither boast of himself, nor censure others, *James* iii. 2. *Matth.* xii. 36.

15. Constancy in the Ways of God, *Job* xxvii. 6, 10.----Such a Man can never be a Hypocrite.

Short Questions whereby to know whether the Heart be truly changed.

1. Hath thine Heart been turn'd into Sorrow for Sin?

2. Hath thy Sorrow turned into Prayer?

3. Hath thy Prayer turned into Faith?

4. Hath thy Faith issued in universal Tenderness and Obedience?

Signs of Faith.

To those that believe,

1. Christ is precious.

2. The Word is sweet.

3. Sin

3. Sin is bitter.
4. Prayer is delightful.
5. Saints are dear.
6. Religion is their Business.
7. The World is a broken Idol.
8. Death is welcome.----Or thus,

They that believe,

Have Christ in their Hearts; Heaven in their Eye; and the World under their Feet. God's Spirit is their Guide; God's Fear is their Guard; God's People are their Companions; God's Promises are their Cordials; Holiness is their Way, and Heaven is their Home.

Signs of Love to Christ.

They that love Christ,

1. Love to think of him.
2. They love to hear of him.
3. They love to read of him.
4. They love to speak $\left. \begin{array}{c} \text{of} \\ \text{for} \\ \text{to} \end{array} \right\}$ him.
5. They love the Presence of Christ.
6. They love the Yoke of Christ.
7. They love the Ministers of Christ.
8. They love the Name of Christ.
9. They hate Sin.
10. They are pleased when Christ is pleas'd.
11. They are griev'd when Christ is griev'd.
12. They long to be with Christ.

84 *Occasional Reflections, &c.*

Christ's Will is their Will ; Christ's Dishonour is their Affliction ; Christ's Cause is their Care ; Christ's Ministers are their Stars ; Christ's Saints are their Companions ; Christ's Day is their Delight ; Christ's Word is their Oracle ; Christ's Glory is their End.

Signs of the Fear of God.

A Man then fears God,

1. When he dares not sin, tho' solicited and tempted to it.
2. When Sin is common and yet he fears it.
3. When he is afraid of an evil Thought.
4. When he dares not sin, tho' he should suffer if he does not.
5. When his Heart is broken, and trembles at the Word of God.
6. When he flies to Christ.
7. When he is studious to please God.

Signs of true Grace.

1. When self-loving is turned into self-loathing ; self-excusing into self-condemning ; self-admiring into self-abhorring ; self-seeking into self-denying.

2. 'Tis a Sign of true Grace when a Man seriously complains of the Want of Grace.

A graceless Person cannot truly complain that he hath no Grace. There is Grace in that Complaint.

3. When the Heart is tender, and feels the Power of an Ordinance.

A Prayer for Children. 85

4. When the Soul hath an Appetite after the Word, 1 *Pet.* ii. 2.

5. When a Man makes Conscience of secret Prayer.

6. When we are taken with their Conversation, and Manner of Life, who are most spiritual, *Zeck.* viii. 23.

7. When we are willing to be acquainted with Christ, and reconciled to God upon any Terms.

8. When a Man approves of all Duties.

9. When he desires more Grace : There is Grace in the Desire of Grace, as there is Sin in the Desire of Sin, *Neb.* i. 11. *Psal.* lxxxiv. 5.

A short Prayer for Children.

O Most great and gracious God, thou art from everlasting to everlasting. No Creature is worthy to come before thee ; much less am I, poor sinful Dust and Ashes.

O Lord, I am conceived and born in Sin. Thou hast nourished and brought me up, but I have rebelled against thee ; I have known thy Will, but have not done it, and therefore deserve *to be beaten with many Stripes*. I have despised thy Promises, and abused thy Mercies. I have been unthankful for Mercies received, and unfruitful under Mercies enjoy'd. I have sinn'd against so much Light, against so much Love, and against so much Warning, that it is of thine infinite Mercy that I am not consumed.

86 *A Prayer for Children.*

sumed. I cannot answer for what I have done ; I cannot bear what I have deserved.

O enter not into Judgment with me! do not punish but pity me ! Remember not what I have done, but remember what Christ hath suffered, and let his Blood go for mine.----- I pray thee, let my Sins be my Grief, but not my Ruin ; let them be laid to my Heart, but not to my Charge. Thou hast found a Ransom, deliver me from the Pit. Since Christ was crucified, let me be released ; as he was afflicted and smitten, let me *be healed by his Stripes, and cured by his Wounds.*

What Comfort can I take in any Thing here below, if Sin lie at the Door?----- Lord, I beseech thee, take away my Sin before thou takest away my Life. Let not me, nor any that are related to me, live in Sin, and die in Sin, and go to the Grave *with a Lye in our Right-Hand.*

I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to sprinkle my Conscience with the Blood of Christ, *which cleanseth from all Sin.* Give me Faith in that Blood, and Peace in the Application of it to my Conscience, that by these thy Tokens for good I may know that I am *not appointed for Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by my Lord Jesus Christ.*---And for his sake grant me thy holy Spirit, I beseech thee, to enlighten my Mind, that I may know thee ; to renew my Will that I may serve thee ; and to sanctify my Affections, and all the Powers

A Prayer for Children. 87

Powers of my Soul and Body, that I may follow thee fully all the Days of my Life.

O Lord, defend me from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Make me good in my Person, and good in my Place. Let thy Spirit rest in me, that I may be always doing or getting good.-----Help me well through this World. Use me whilst I live, and don't refuse me when I come to die. Let my Life be a holy Walking with thee, that my Death may be a comfortable Going to thee.

For Christ's sake, O Lord, bless all thy People, this Nation, and the Family I belong to. Give all true Peace and Holiness. Hasten the Downfal of *Babylon*, the Conversion of the *Jews*, and the Fulness of the *Gentiles*.

Heavenly Father, I bless, praise, and magnify thee, for my Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life; but above all, for the Lord Jesus Christ, that unspeakable Gift of thine; for the Means and Seasons of Grace, and for all thy Mercies.---Hear me, O Lord, for Christ's sake, in whose Name and Words I further pray-----

Our Father, which art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread, and forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors. And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

C H A P. V.

Containing some Letters of the late Reverend Mr. John Mafon, which he sent to feveral of his Friends; tending to promote the Power of Godlinefs, both in Persons and Families.

L E T T E R I.

To my dear Sister, Mrs. Hannah Wyatt, under Illnefs.

Dear Sister,

I Beseech his most merciful Majesty to send his Word and heal you! That we may not have Sorrow upon Sorrow!-----O, if it were his Will to restore you for his Glory, and the Good of many!-----And who can tell, but by this Affliction he is fitting you for future Service? And that the Prayers of your many affectionate and faithful Friends may be a Means of your Recovery? Which I hope, through the *Thanksgiving of many, will redound to the Praise and Glory of God.* -----But, I believe, it is not Recovery you wish for, any farther than as it will be a
Mani-

Manifestation of God's Pleasure, and an Opportunity of serving him ; it is not *that* you so much desire, as to *depart and to be with Christ, which indeed is far better.*

My dear Sister, What Thanks can we render unto God who hath visited us with Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost, through our dear Redeemer ? and hath given us that Communion with him here, which is a Pledge of our joint Communion with him in everlasting Glory ? Certainly you cannot but remember some *Bethels* and *Chebars*, where the Lord hath met you and owned you ; some Promises which have been made your own ; and some *Times of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord.* Blessed be God that you *have a Witness in yourself* ; and internal Evidence, an inward *Sight and Taste that the Lord is gracious.*

The Lord hath acquainted you with that which is the very Sum and Substance of the Gospel, *viz. That Christ came into the World to save Sinners* : That a Christian's Thankfulness flows from Faith in the Promises : That Self-denial must run through the whole Course of this Life, as the Warp through the Woof : And that Christ is a Christian's Life, Peace, Hope, and Security : Whilst he lives, we are in Safety :

*Whilst God is merciful and true,
We are both safe and happy too :*

That

That a Christian's important and daily Duty is to eye and engage his continual Assistance : And that our Recovery from daily Infirmities must be by a daily Recourse to this ever-living, ever-loving, ever-pleading Advocate.

You know also, that Submission to the Will of God, is a yielding to those Methods whereby he is conducting us to eternal Happiness and Glory ; and that every Dram of Affliction is ordered us by the Love of our ever-gracious and all-merciful Father.-----Bow then to his Sovereignty, and believe his Grace : You are in a happy Hand ; in happy Circumstances ; all the Paths of God are Mercy and Truth to you---Infinite and immortal Thanks are due to our ever-blessed Father, Redeemer and Comforter. The Lord be with your Spirit !---Grace and Peace be with you ! *Amen.*---I remain

Your affectionate and

most obliged Brother in the Lord,

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R II.

To my dear Friend Mrs. Mary Holmes.

Dear Friend,

--- **O** That you might live in the Lord's Sight !-----If I knew the present State of your Heart, I could better tell what
to

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to write to you. However, I shall set down some Things for your Comfort.

Do not say that you are left of God, and there is no Hope for you : I tell you there is Mercy enough in God, Merits enough in Christ, Power enough in the Spirit, Room enough in Heaven, and Scope enough in the Promises for you.

Do not say that you are a Reprobate, and a Cast-away ; it is a Sin to think so : Every one is bound to hope that he is elected ; and, in Virtue of that Hope, to strive to make his *Calling and Election sure. The Lord is good to them that wait for him, and to the Soul that seeketh him, Lam. iii. 25.* There will be Doubts and Fears, but we must not cherish them. We must not question God's Ability to save ; for he can do all Things : Nor must we question his Willingness to save ; for he hath sent his own Son into the World to save us---Say to thyself, *he hath made me willing to be saved, and is not he willing to save me ?* Alas ! *my tender Mercies are Cruelties in Respect of his infinite Compassions ?* We cannot be so willing to confess Sin, as he is to pardon it. We cannot desire to be saved, so much as he delights to save. None ever trusted him, but they found him a good God.

Therefore, *my dear Friend*, have honourable Thoughts of God. Though he should hide himself from thee for a Moment, yet lift up thy Heart to him, and wait for him ;
in

in his own Time he will make himself known unto you ; he will be your own God, for your own dear Saviour's Sake.

Perhaps you sit in Darkness ; but the Lord will be your Light. It is darkest a little before the break of Day: *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the Upright in Heart ;* and it will spring up. *Bekold, the Husbandman waits for the precious Fruits of the Earth :* Be patient then, and wait for God in the Use of all his Means, and the good Hour will come.

Perhaps you find a Coldness and Deadness of Heart, and complain that you cannot serve God with Life and Affection. This is a Complaint of many of God's dear Children. But we must do what we can, we must be reading, hearing, praying, waiting upon God in his own Way, and he will give us his quickening Spirit.

The World will reproach us ; but it reproached Christ before us. We must be willing to follow a suffering Saviour in a suffering Way. Whatever Men say against us, *they* must answer for it, not *we*. *Only let our Conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* Let us give *no Occasion to his Enemies to blaspheme his Name.* And he that suffered so much *for* us, O ! let him not suffer *by* us.

We must take our Rules of Living from the Word, and not from the World. And the Lord give us Wisdom to direct us, and Zeal to quicken us in his own blessed Ways !

And

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-----And to confirm our Obedience and Patience, let us remember, that the Lord is coming, and his Reward is with him: He is coming to receive us to himself, that *where he is we may be also*.

And as for the Things of this Life, the same Love that provided a Saviour for thee, will provide all necessary temporal Blessings for thee: Thy heavenly Father, who knows what is best for thee, will chuse thine Inheritance; therefore be not too careful about these Things, but rest your Care upon him who careth for you. Leave yourself with him, for he is *Love*, 1 *John* iv. 8. Commit your whole self, Soul and Body, into the Hands of his infinite Love.

Now the Lord of his infinite Mercy put his Spirit into this dead Letter, for the Quickening your Soul; and I beseech him to make it effectual for your eternal Good.--- I commend you to God, and the Word of his Grace, and rest

Your faithful Friend,

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R III.

To my dear Sister Mrs. Margaret Holmes.

Dear Sister,

MAY these Lines find you well and happy--- I joy in the Thoughts, that your Soul is secur'd in the Hands of Christ, and that in this Life you are as happy as *Content* itself can make you.----- Who hath the largest Share of external Comforts, but he who believes this World is Vanity? Indeed, the surest Experience of the World's Emptiness ariseth from a Taste of Christ's Fulness. Though there be nothing but Disappointments in the World to them that make it their Idol, yet it will be slavishly pursu'd and crav'd by them, because they know no better Things; for the infatuated Idolater hath not the Sense to say within himself, *Is there not a Lye in my right Hand?*

O blessed be God, who hath engaged your Heart for himself; in the Strength of Christ follow on to know him. How should the Way of spiritual Thrift be valu'd and improv'd by those who are taught of God, where their main and eternal Interest lies? Where every superadded Degree of Favour in Religion doth at once increase the Stock in the Heart, and the Bank that is laid up in Heaven. 'Tis a Provision of Spikenard, and precious Ointment, against our Funeral.----

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Let us call those our golden Hours that are spent with God.

I should now at large commend to you that excellent Duty of Self-Examination, but that it hath been effectually pressed upon you by a dear Saint now in Heaven. Nor have I cause to doubt, but as her Memory, so her Counsels are inviolably preserv'd in the most inward Rooms of your Heart.---- Accept the hearty Respects of me and mine--- most ardently desiring for you all the Blessings that were purchas'd by the most valuable Blood of the Son of God. I remain in him,

Dear Sister,

Your most affectionate Brother,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER IV.

To the same.

My dear Sister,

I Preserve carefully my ancient Respects.--- Though I have been long silent I am your Orator before the highest Throne, and do earnestly desire, that you may grow in the Faith of Jesus, and in lively Communion with him, which is the most comfortable Thing in the World.--- Alas! we are less than nothing, worse than nothing. Christ is all--- May he be so to us! ----Let us glorify him
more

more by relying upon his Satisfaction and Merits, for all that we can do or suffer cannot atone for the least of our Sins.-----'Tis the Self-emptied Heart, and Beggar's Hand, that must receive this infinite Gift of God---The Woman of *Canaan* is our Pattern---

“ *True, Lord, I am no better than a Dog,*
 “ *but there are Crumbs for Dogs. I am as*
 “ *bad as Sin can make me, and deserve to be*
 “ *as miserable as Hell can make me; but,*
 “ *Lord, I am not so bad as thou art good; I*
 “ *am not so miserable as thou art merciful.---*

O, my dear Sister, I desire that you may now live by Faith, and breathe by Prayer; that you may finally dwell above, *where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God.---*The Lord spiritualize our Souls, and quicken us according to his Loving Kindness.-----We long to see you.---Farewel in Christ.

Your affectionate Brother,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER V.

To the same.

My dear Sister,

YOU are dearly remembered by us; though we seldom converse personally, or by Letters, our hearty Prayers are for you at the Throne of Grace. I hope we shall meet together before the Throne of Glory.

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I hope I need not suggest Arguments of Comfort to you, who know what it is to enjoy the Presence of God on Earth, and are therefore prepared to enjoy the Presence of Christ in Heaven.-----Doubtless the Lord is our Father ; though our earthly Parents be ignorant of us. I commend you to him through Christ----Let us hope in the Lord, who is Almighty and most Merciful.---The Lord abound in his Mercy to you ! May he be a Sun to direct you, a Shield to protect you, a Portion to sustain you, and a God to save you !

O, that we may hear the Rod ! which saith
---*Sin no more ; get an Interest in Christ ;
prize Time ; and prepare to meet your God !*
That we may inwardly hear the Voice of the Rod, whilst we outwardly feel the Smart of it !--- I beseech the Lord to prosper you every Way ; to watch over you ; and to rejoice over you, to do you good ; to sweeten your Life with his Love, and to fit you for his whole Pleasure.--- No more, but all hearty Respects to you, and that I am

Yours, in our dearest Redeemer,

JOHN MASON,

H L E T T E R

LETTER VI.

*To Mrs. Elizabeth Glover.**My dear Friend in Christ,*

HOW hard a Thing is it to exercise Faith when we have most need of it? And how sad a Thing is it, that when we have most need of the Lord's Presence and Help, we should then especially grieve him with our Doubts and Distrusts? However we have this to comfort us, that where the Lord seeth Faith in Sincerity he will pardon its Infirmiti.--- But O! when shall we believe against Sense, and hope against Hope? When shall we give all Glory to God by grounding upon his Word, when we want present Experience and feeling? saying,

*The Glory of my Glory still shall be,
To give all Glory and myself to thee.*

When shall we attain to that excellent Frame of believing which the Church was in, *Mic. vii. 8, 9. Rejoice not against me, O mine Enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in Darknes the Lord shall be a Light unto me. I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my Cause, and execute Judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the Light, and I shall behold his Righteousness?*

But

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But though we have not attain'd so far, let us bless God for any Measure of Faith, one Grain whereof excelleth all the Riches in the World.---And let us take heed of falling into Sin. To lie under the *Hidings of God's* Face is a great Affliction; but to lie under a *Sense of his Displeasure* is a greater. There is no Evil so great as Sin. Let us flee from Error and Temptation; avoid ill Company, which will either taint us, or grieve us; be jealous over our own Spirits; hate Presumption and Carelesness, and be much in humble Prayer, and holy Fear. I am

Your sincere Friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER VII.

To the same.

Loving Christian Friend,

YOU complain of that in your Letter which no Creature upon Earth is free from. The best Christian must acknowledge that Pride dwelleth in him. You do well to complain of it; but you must strive against it, and so we must all.---There is so much of Heaven in the Soul as there is of Humility. ---Take a true Measure of yourself. Consider what you are. Beg of the Lord for a humble Spirit. Remember Christ was humble.

As for your Temptations, and Castings down,--- it is no News to hear of a tempted Christian, or a dejected Saint. I cannot see that any other Temptation hath taken you than what is common to the People of God. *Let not Zion say, her God hath forsaken her; her God hath forgotten her. Can a Mother forget her sucking Child? --- You may be in the Dark a while, but wait for the Lord, as they that wait for the Morning.---* To his everlasting Grace and Mercy I commend you, and remain

Your faithful Friend,

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R VIII.

To the same.

My dear Friend in our dearest Lord Jesus,
THE Lord hath said, *I will never fail you nor forsake you.* He will not turn away from doing you good; but he will put his Fear into your inward Parts, that you shall never depart from him. Having these Promises let us stand fast, holding Faith and a good Conscience.--- Let us allow God to be infinitely wiser than ourselves, and maintain honourable Thoughts of his Majesty and Mercy; for as is his Majesty, so is his Mercy. Let us bow to his Sovereignty, and believe his
 I Grace.

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Grace. There are Crumbs for Dogs; Gifts for Rebels; and Compassions for Sinners.--- The Lord increase our Hope, encourage our Faith, and inflame our Love, and perfect that which concerns us! ---- As we have had joint Communion with our good God on Earth, I trust it shall be perfected in Glory. ---To everlasting Glory is my dear Sister *Wyat* and my dear Brother *Peter Holmes* lately gone. The Lord, who (I trust) had fitted them for himself, fit us also! --- O! blessed be God, for Good Hope through Grace! ---- Pray for me, that I may stand fast in the Lord. --- With mine and my Wife's kind Respect to you, and commending you to infinite and eternal Mercy in Christ, I rest in him,

*Your faithful
and affectionate Friend,*

JOHN MASON.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let not your Heart be troubled, ye believe in God, &c.

Trust in the Lord and do good.

Look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your Faith.

Surely there is an End, and thine Expectation shall not be cut off.

It is but a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

H 3

LETTER

LETTER IX.

*To the same.**My dearly beloved in the Lord,*

I HAVE had abundance of Comfort whilst I have been caring for thy precious Soul (the Lord is my Witness!) and I hope we shall both rejoice together in the Day of Christ.

I received your Letter, and read it with a sad Heart, finding you were troubled. The Lord guide you and settle you!

I look upon this as a sure Principle --- that the Worship of God must agree with the Word of God. I judge a Form of Prayer lawful, as agreeable to the Word of God.--- The Ceremonies are no Part of God's Worship, for then they must be Matter of Necessity, which we hold them not to be --- but Matters of Decency and Order, as the Apostle saith, *Let all Things be done decently, and in Order.* Neither Sin nor Holiness is to be put in them; but they are of the Nature of those Meats *which* (the Apostle saith) *if we eat we are not the better; if we eat not we are not the worse.* ---- I do not know your particular Scruples, otherwise I should be glad to offer what Satisfaction I could. I only tell you some Part of my Thoughts. I have much Christian Affection for those that are otherwise minded; in case they be purely
con-

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conscientious, humble, and charitable Souls.
---- The Lord keep you through his Name!
---- I am your faithful Friend that tenderly
loves your Soul.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R X.

My dearly beloved Friends in-Christ,

I Rejoice in God, who hath called you into the Fellowship of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; and into that Grace, wherein you stand. Let us remember that we are, by Nature, Children of Wrath, even as others. We might have been cast into Hell long ago. Were we not provoking Sinners? O how did the Lord call upon us, and we regarded him not?---But did the Lord stand and knock, and call till he made us answer, *Speak, Lord, for thy Servants hear?* Did he give us Ears to hear? Would he not let us alone, till he had won our Hearts? ---- O blessed be his Name! We might have been Blasphemers, Persecutors, Haters and Despisers of that which is good, at this Day. We might have counted the Life of Religion Madness; Praying, and Professing of Religion, Fancy and Folly. We might have been left to ourselves; all our Hope might have been in this Life; all our Comfort in this World; all our Confidence

in Creatures; and all our Heaven upon Earth: Hath the Lord caused us to know better things? O let us admire his Free Grace, now and for ever!

My Friends, Consider how great Things the Lord hath done for you. Call to mind your former Experiences, and live as those whom the Lord hath redeemed by his Blood. Now you must look upon yourselves as the Lord Christ's, and not your own. Consider *from* what you are called, and *to* what you are called.

Would you live holily, observe these Rules.

1. Live in the Eye of God. 2. Observe the Example of Christ. 3. Consider the Fruit and End of Things. The Fruit of Sin is Shame and Sorrow. Sin is a Viper in the end: But the Fruit of Righteousness is Peace; Holiness is eternal Life, in the End. 4. Bind the Commandments upon your Hearts. 5. Shun the Appearances, and the least Beginnings of Sin. 6. Be frequent and fervent in secret Prayer.

My Friends, Would you live comfortably, take these Directions.

1. Live not so much upon the Comforts of God, as upon the God of Comforts. Be afraid of Unbelief; that is a great Sin. Do not

not greaten your Sins above God's saving Power. Believe in the Word, firmly and constantly. Trust perfectly to the Grace and Mercy of God in Christ. *I will trust in the Mercy of God (saith David) for ever and ever,* Psal. lii. 8.

2. Beware of Sin, especially of wilful Sin: That will bring a Cloud, and make a Breach between God and your Soul.

3. *Do not mind earthly Things.* O take heed of unlawful Affections; of an unlawful Carriage of the Heart, about lawful Things.

4. Examine the Ways of your Heart daily: Search yourselves. *What Sin have I committed? What Duty have I omitted this Day?* Every Night look back upon the Thoughts and Affections, and Speeches of the Day past. Confess your Failings over the Head of the *Scape-Goat*. This is another necessary Means to keep your Peace with God, and to walk comfortably before him: And I pray observe it.

5. Examine your Heart farther, and consider the gracious Actings and Workings of God's blessed Spirit within you; what good Thoughts, what good Desires, Aims, Resolutions, God hath put into you. Consider what Out-goings of your Heart, after God, there have been; what Incomes, and Influences of his Grace. Daily examine your Hearts for these Things, and give God the Glory of all the gracious Workings of his Spirit in your Soul.

6. If you would walk comfortably with God, mind not what is forg'd,

forg'd, but what is written. Heed not every Fancy the Devil may dart into you (for then you lie at the Mercy of your Enemy) but keep close to the written Word of God. *Thus it is written*, said our Saviour to Satan the Tempter.---So much for comfortable Walking.

Dear Friends; *Would you walk peaceably and charitably, take these Rules.*

1. Remember God hath called you to Peace.
2. Remember when Christ was reviled, *he reviled not again.*
3. If others neglect their Duty to you, yet do not you neglect your Duty to God, nor to them. Let not another's Sin cause you to sin: To render Railing for Railing, is to return Sin for Sin.
4. You must shew your Love to God, whom you have not seen, by your Love to your Brother, whom you see daily. Shew your Piety by your Charity.
5. Consider that an unbridled Tongue is a Sign of an unsanctified Heart. They that have not a Dram of Grace to tame their Tongues, shall one Day want a Drop of Water to cool their Tongues.
6. Do good to others. If they do not thank you for it, yet God will bless you for it. The less Reward you have on Earth, the greater shall your Reward be in Heaven: As the less Wages the Servant takes up within his Year, the more comes in at the Year's End.

Dear

Dear Friends ; *Would you be constant in good Ways and Purposes, take these Directions.*

1. Remember you have engaged yourselves to God, and therefore you must keep yourselves from Idols. You have given up your Names to God, and you must give up your Hearts to God. You have made a Covenant with God by Sacraments. If Satan or the World are Suiters for your Hearts, tell them, *You are already disposed of ; you are pre-engag'd to God ; you have chosen your God, and you must not think of changing him.* 2. Consider whither would you go from Christ ? Where do you think to find such another God as your God ; such another Friend as Jesus Christ ? 3. Remember, if it be good to draw near to God, it is better to draw nearer to him : Still the nearer the better. One may see an End of earthly Perfection ; but there is no End of the Perfection of Jesus Christ. 4. Be downright for God ; and you shall find Soul-heartning Comfort in God, that shall keep you close to God. 5. Walk humbly with God ; that is the way to walk closely with God. If a Christian is humble, he is a Christian indeed : God will not suffer such a one to be tempted above his Strength. 6. Let not Opinions swim in your Heads ; that will make you fall : But let the great Things of Religion sink into your Hearts, and that will make you stand.

stand. Be content, yea, willing to suffer for Christ; who did so contentedly and willingly suffer for you. And if you suffer with him, you shall be glorified together.

Now, *my dear Friends*, the Lord be with you all! I beseech him to strengthen, stablish, confirm and settle you; and preserve you all to his holy and everlasting Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. In whom I am

Your faithful Friend,

J. M.

LETTER XI.

Dear Friend in Christ,

I Long to hear of the State of your Soul. O lay hold upon the Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively Faith. He is an able, willing, only Saviour; the Soul's Resting-Place, the Soul's Dwelling-Place, the Soul's Hiding-Place: O that you may be *hid* in him now, that you may be *found* in him at last. Sin must drive us *to* him, not *from* him. We need him infinitely. We are, like *Peter*, sinking into the Waters: *Save, Lord; or we perish!* Christ, or Hell, must be our Portion for ever. Christ is our only Ark, to save us from perishing. Every Soul will be uncas'd, e'er it be long; and then it will appear whether they
ever

ever seriously applied themselves to Christ. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* Nothing but Condemnation to them that are out of him. Faith makes Christ ours. This consists in *Self-denial*, and *Self-resignation*. We must see our Sins, so far as to abhor ourselves; abhor ourselves, so far as to deny ourselves; deny ourselves, so far as to resign ourselves up into the saving Arms of an only Saviour. They that do this, are *pardoned, sanctified, saved for ever.*

Now let me intreat you to ask your own Heart some Questions.

1. *Hath Sin been laid to my Heart? hath it been my greatest Burden?*

2. *Have I confessed my particular Sins, and the Sinfulness of my Nature, with Sorrow?*

3. *Have I been forced to make my Appeal to Christ, knowing that I am lost for ever, unless he freely save me? Have I cried for a Christ, as a condemned Man for a Pardon?*

4. *Do I believe he is able and willing to save me? Do I believe that he that spread his Arms on the Cross to die for me, spreads his Arms now in the Gospel, and in Heaven, to save me? Have I pleaded his Promises? O what a precious Promise is that, John vi. 37. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!*

5. *Have I had Joy and Peace in Believing? Hath Christ, relied on, calm'd and quieted my poor troubled afflicted Soul?*

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6. *Do I love Christ more than Riches, Honours, Pleasures? Do I love all his Ordinances? Do I love all his Saints?*

7. *Do I hate Sin in itself? Do I hate Sin in myself? Do I hate every Sin? every false Way?*

8. *Do I unfeignedly, intirely yield up myself to the Service of my Saviour?*

If your Heart answers to these Questions, happy, happy, are you, that ever you were born.

O my Friend, I commend you to Christ. The Lord follow you with the Motions of his Spirit; that you may follow him with continual Supplications in the Spirit! That, of the Fulness of Christ, you may receive *Grace for Grace*.-----The Peace of God, and the God of Peace be with you. With mine and my Sister's Love, desiring your Prayers, I rest

Your affectionate Friend in Christ,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XII.

Water-Stratford.

My dear Friend,

I Hear the Hand of the Lord is gone out against you: O *hear the Road, and who hath appointed it! O turn to him that smiteth you!* It hath pleased the Lord to take away the
I Earth

Reverend Mr. John Mason. III

Earth that lay next your Root : He hath been digging about you ; pray now that you may be fruitful. Now fly from the Wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal Life. Now let the Business of your Soul be the Business of your Life. Open your Doors to Christ : Invite him to dwell among you, by worshipping him in your Family. Whilst your Hand is in this World, let your Heart be in Heaven : O lay up for yourself a Treasure there. What is the World ! Seek Things above. If we be not sure of Christ, what are we sure of ? If young ones die, how long have we to live ?-- O strive to enter in at the straight Gate. Search and try your Ways : Consider in the Lord's Fear, wherefore he hath thus contended with you. Repent of every Sin your Conscience sets before you : Confess Sin, and earnestly plead the Blood of Christ. Now the Lord hath a Controversy with you, humble yourself under his mighty Hand. Cry for the Blood of Sprinkling : Never rest till your Pardon be sealed through the Blood of Christ. -----Our kind Respects from hence to you and your Wife. The Lord pity you in your great Affliction, and every way bless you.

I am your loving Friend,

JOHN MASON.

L E T-

L E T T E R XIII.

My reconciled and dear Friend,

THESE are to thank you for your pious and kind Letter ; and to assure you of my hearty Affection to you and yours. For why ? Had you been a perfect Stranger to me, if I had but heard that there was such a one as lov'd Christ in sincerity, and earnestly desired more Communion with him, a deeper Sense of his Love, and larger Communication of his Graces, I should be very *unworthy* to deny my Love and Respect to such a *worthy* Object. But since I have had the spiritual Benefit and Comfort of your Acquaintance for divers Years together (wherein we took sweet Counsel together, and walked to the House of God as good Friends, where we were mutually refreshed with the *Word and Bread of Life*, eating of the same spiritual Meat, and drinking of the same spiritual Drink, and receiving sweet Pledges of our eternal Communion with God) God forbid I should be wanting in any Office of Christian Love toward you and yours. Nor do I esteem your *Jealousy* to be any other than the Fruit of your abundant *Love*, which is not utterly lost, though I confess with Shame, I fall short of that necessary Gospel Duty of *Brotherly Kindness*, as I do of *all others*, which I beseech God to cover with his Mercy in Christ.

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Christ. The Lord enable me to *run* with Diligence and *Patience the Race which he hath set before me*—— God be merciful to *Little Lynford*, which is left as *Sheep without a Shepherd*. — But if they *hunger and thirst after the Word of Righteousness they shall be filled*. I hope when I have Leisure and Opportunity I shall not be wanting to them. The Lord comfort their Hearts. I and my Wife remember our hearty Respects to you and yours. God hath been infinitely merciful to us, and hath given us a Daughter (now call'd *Martha*.) I hope he will perfect his Mercy towards us. We are full of his Mercies. O that we were full of his Praises! — My Prayers are for you and yours; whom God bless, preserve, and keep. O that *all his Ways* might be *Mercy and Truth* towards you! *Cast not away your Confidence, which hath so great Recompence of Reward*. The Life of Sense is a *troublesome, disquieting Life*; for what doth Sense discover but Vanity and Misery? But the Life of Faith is a *comfortable Life*. For Faith makes glorious Discoveries of God and Christ, Saints and Angels, Rest and Peace, and Life for ever. Nothing troubles you when you are above.----- Keep where you are well. I remain

Your truly loving Friend,

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XIV.

Dear Friend,

THOUGH Providence hath separated us, yet it refresheth me to think upon you, and that I am interested in *your Prayers* as you *are in mine*. Well, if we are met in Christ, we shall meet upon the Bench in the great Day of Assize, and before a Throne of Glory in our Father's Kingdom. In the mean while, our God is with us both whilst we are with him. In his Presence is *Fulness of Joy*. It is not so much the Change of Place, as the *Presence of God*, which makes Heaven. *There is Heaven* where God shines and manifests himself. When a Soul can say, *I would not go to Heaven, if it were to meet God there; and if I should be cast into the Flames of Hell, I could not find in mine Heart to blaspheme God;* the Exercise of such a Meditation will mightily help her against Temptations.

Many a good Soul doth not know how much she loves God; but when she feels that Affection stirring within her. --- O then, she is in a new, serene, comfortable Frame! Satan flies. *Perfect Love casts out Fear*. Love God, and praise God, and all is at Peace. Nay, admit the Soul hath not got full Assurance of her Pardon; yet if she sets down this Resolution ----- *Let God be glorified whatever becomes of me. Let the Angels praise him; let*
the

the Saints praise him; let the Jews and Gentiles be called in to praise him; and if it may please his Divine Majesty, let my poor unworthy Soul please him, and be a Praise to his Grace for ever and ever: If it can say this, it must be happy with it. That must needs be a happy Soul that breathes forth the Praises of God, ascribes all Glory to God, and can sing

*The Glory of my Glory still shall be,
To give all Glory and myself to thee.*

The Lord put and keep your Heart in a praising Frame. O how well doth this angelical and evangelical Disposition besit and become those, who of Sinners are made Saints; of Enemies, Children; of Slaves, Heirs; of burning Brands, shining Stars! When we consider seriously what we have been, and what we *might* have been, nay, what we *must* have been, if infinite Mercy had not prevented; (as the Lord was seen in the Mount, when *Isaac* lay bound upon the Altar, Mercy came in between the Knife and the Sacrifice) instead of being scourg'd, how nobly pardon'd and promoted! rais'd from Devils to Angels Company; from the lowest Depth to the greatest Heighth; this (I say) if we consider it, is Matter of Admiration, not of Expression. If we had as many Tongues as we have Veins or Drops of Blood, they could never utter a thousandth Part of the due

Praise of *Divine Grace*. *Let us now magnify the Lord, and exalt his Name together.* O the Height, and Breadth, and Depth, and Length, of the Father's Love! O the infinite and unfearchable Riches of Free Grace! O! the tremendous Mystery, and invaluable Mercy of the Incarnation of the Son of God! O the stupendous Humiliation and Condescension of eternal Glory and Omnipotency! O the unparallel'd Love of a dying Saviour! O the sweet heavenly Communion of the blessed Comforter! ---- Lord, what do these Things mean? ---- Lord, what are we? or what is our Father's House, that thou hast brought us hitherto? That thou shouldst make thy self glorious in our Glory, who had made ourselves vile in dishonouring thy Name? --- O, let us give him our whole Souls, who hath redeem'd them by his Blood! For it is fit he should have the utmost of so dear a Purchase. Farewel, my dearest Friend in the Lord, in whom I am

Your true Friend,

Stanton,
Oct. 19. 1672.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER

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L E T T E R X V.

My dear Friend,

THOUGH we be parted on Earth I hope we shall meet in Heaven ; though our Work should not lie together in the Lord's Vineyard, yet I hope we shall fup together with Chrift ; though we do not fojourn together, yet I hope we shall dwell together to all Eternity ; if we should never feaft together any more upon the Word and Sacraments, yet I hope we shall eat that *Bread and drink that Wine which is for ever new in our Father's Kingdom.* Be of good Comfort, *Sifter*, it is but yet a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. We shall be welcome at home however it fares with us in our Journey. Remember the Apoftle *Paul* had no certain Dwelling-place ; nay, our blessed Saviour had not *where to lay his Head.* We may be poured from Veffel to Veffel, and tossed to and fro upon this Ocean ; it will not be long, I hope, e'er we be fixed in our Harbour. My Prayers are and shall be for thee, that God would difpofe of thee to his own Glory and thy Comfort. Let not thy Heart be troubled, thou believest in God, &c. I faw your Mother Yesterday, and ſhe was in good Health, as we all are

I 3 here,

here, blessed be the Lord. I should be glad to hear of your Welfare. I rest

Your Friend in Christ,

Stanton,
Dec. 8. 1673.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XVI.

My dear Friend in Christ,

THE Providence of the Lord extends its self to every Thing ; but there is a special Providence over the Children of God, 1 *Tim.* iv. 10. The Providences of God to the Children of God are *purchased* Providences, *sanctified* Providences, *Soul* Providences : They are Ordinances to them, Instruments of good to their Souls. Again, the Providences of God to his Children are Promises fulfilled, *Psal.* xxv. 10. Again, the Providences of God to his Children are the Fruits and Answers of Prayer. Again, the Providences of the Lord steer the Children of God Heaven-wards. Again, the Providences of God combine and join their Forces for the good of every sincere, single-hearted Believer, *Rom.* viii. 28. *My Friend*, this, I trust, is your Happiness, that you are under the Eye and Conduct and Tuition of a fatherly and special

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cial Providence. Let us answer the Call of Providence ; which is, to watch, pray, and believe ; and let us expect *good* Things from a *good* God ; and *great* Things from a *great* God, through our *faithful* and *dear* Mediator, *who ever lives to make Intercession for us.* --- I suppose you may have heard, that our Friend *Mary Tompkins* is gone to her eternal Rest : She died triumphantly. O ! (said she upon her Death-Bed) What Things have I seen ? *Ann Kemp* asked her, *Hath the Lord given you a Glimpse of Heaven ? I cannot tell* (said *Mary*) *whether it be Heaven or not, but Joys, Joys, such Things as never mortal Eye beheld. I have fought the good Fight.* And so she went on in heavenly Expressions. O ! what Cause have we to bless the Lord, that she who was *afflicted* and *tossed* with so many Temptations in her Life-time, found Joy and Comfort in a dying Hour ! The Lord was nearest to her when she needed him most. My Wife remains as formerly ; I hope (thro' the Goodness of God) not worse. I desire the Continuance of your Prayers for us. The Lord be with your Spirit. No more, but our Love. In haste, I rest

Your affectionate faithful

Friend in Christ,

J. M.

L E T T E R X V I I .

Dear Friend,

THOUGH I am but a weak Interpreter of the Scriptures, and especially of those *hard Places* which are liable to so many different Translations and Expositions, as that is *Psal. xi. 3.* Yet that I may not be thought to slight your Request (whose Profit I am bound to seek) I will tell you what seems to me to be the true Sense of that Text. Not that *David* here doubted of God's Word, as if it were not a sufficient Foundation for him to build upon; (for in this *Psalms* we find him very much believing, and confident in his God, from the Beginning to the End :) I think rather, this was Part of the Speech of his carnal Counsellors, who had bid him *Fly as a Bird to his Mountain*, in the first Verse; and they gave this Reason for it in the second Verse, *For lo, (say they) the Wicked bend their Bow, &c.* But he scorns their carnal Counsel in that Word, *In the Lord put I my Trust.* But they continue their Speech in the third Verse. *If the Foundations be destroyed, what can the Righteous do?* As if they had said, The Forests, Mountains, and Caves, are your strongest Holds; keep to those Foundations; hold you there, or you will perish, though your Cause be never so righteous. Holy *David* disdains their carnal

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nal Advice, as you may read in the next Verſe. *There is a God in Heaven that takes Notice how Things are carried in the World; that will favour the Righteous* (though he try them for a while) *but he will utterly deſtroy the Wicked, and ſhew them no Mercy.* Which is the Meaning of the fourth Verſe, and of thoſe that follow, to the End of the *Pſalm*. And this is the moſt natural Senſe, which, upon ſerious Conſideration, I can fix upon this Portion of Scripture. Not but that I am willing to be informed by any one, of a better Interpretation. ----- *My dear Friend*, It pities me to read your Complaints. The good Lord (if it be his heavenly Will) reſtore you the Joy of his Salvation. Self-abuſing, and conſtant waiting upon God in his own bleſſed Ways, are approv'd Means to recover loſt Comfort. My Prayers are, and ſhall be for you. With mine and my Wife's hearty Love to you, and all our Chriſtian Friends with you, or near you, I reſt

Your aſſured Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Aug. 10. 1675.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XVIII.

My dear Friend,

CH R I S T be your Soul's Comfort!--- Though he hath taken away your Husband, *The Desire of your Eyes, with a Stroke,* he hath promised, that *his Loving-Kindness* *he will not take away.* The World is full of Changes, but our God is unchangeable. Common Mercies are sweet Mercies, but Covenant Mercies are sure Mercies. Christ is faithful: He ever Lives, and (saith he) *because I live ye shall live also.*

The Lord support and comfort your Heart under this heavy Hand of his which he hath laid upon you. O! that it may bring your Soul nearer to God, and to Jesus Christ. O! that *that* Providence which hath wrought Death in your Husband, may work Life in your Heart. Hate sin; overcome the World; love Christ; mind Heaven and heavenly Things, my dear Christian Friend.

I have great Hopes that your Soul is safe, however it may please the Lord in his Wisdom to deal with your Body and Family. Submit yourself cheerfully to his Will and Pleasure; and say, *Lord, here I am, here is my Family, do with me what shall seem good in thine Eyes.*--- The Lord be gracious to you. The Lord be gracious to *Haverham.* The Lord awaken the Hearts of the People. O
that

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that they might repent quickly! Because Wrath is gone out from the Lord. The Lord stay his Hand if it be his Will. The Lord Jesus stand between the Living and the Dead. The Lord blefs his Word and Rod to yourself and others. The Lord dwell, and rule, and walk in the Midst of you. O keep close to God! he will never fail you nor forsake you.

My Prayers are for you. My kind Respects to yourself, and all our Christian Friends. My Wife sends her Love to you. The Lord be with your Spirit. ---- I remain

Your loving Friend in the Lord,

Stratford,
Sept. 25.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R X I X .

*My dear Christian Friend, and heartily beloved
in our Lord Jesus Christ,*

WHat a good God have we! that remembers us in our low Estate, thinks upon us when we are poor and needy, and is nearest to us when we need him most! He is a Sun to comfort us, a Shield to protect us; he gives us Grace, he gives us Glory, he gives us Himself. O what a good God have we! ---- Why hath he chosen us! We did not
I choose

choose him, but he hath chosen us. He hath loved us first, and hath loved us freely. *Behold what Manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Children of God!* Is not his Love sweeter than Wine? Is it not better than Life? Does it not sweeten a Sick-Bed? Does it not sweeten the Thoughts of Death? When the Love of God is shed abroad in the Heart, then the blessed Soul cries, *Welcome Death, welcome Judgment, welcome Eternity: Come sweet Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

I rejoyce to hear of your Recovery. And I rejoyce in the Thoughts of that comfortable Entertainment your Saviour gave you in the Time of your Sickness. When the Apostle *Peter* was upon the Water, he said *Lord, bid me come to thee.* And so many of Christ's Friends have desired him to call them. And did you run to embrace Christ? Did you rejoyce in the Thoughts of his Coming? And long to depart, that you might be with him, which is best of all? O! Blessed be God for the Savour of his sweet Ointments, which drew out your Soul after him. Blessed be God for his Almighty Spirit, which made you so eagerly and joyfully desirous of the Coming of Jesus Christ. But now you must wait for Christ, as the People by the Sea-side, *Luke viii. 40.* He will certainly come. He saith, *Behold, I come quickly.* It is but yet a little while, and he that
shall

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shall come, will come, and will not tarry. You must wait for him, and watch for him. Trim your Lamp, that when you hear the joyful Sound, *Behold your Bridegroom cometh,* you may be ready; and the Bride-Chamber Door may stand open for you. ---- A good *Martyr* in Scotland going to suffer for Christ, said to his Wife, *I will not bid you good Night, for we shall meet at Supper.* It is not long e'er all God's People shall be gathered together to him, and shall be for ever with him.

Remember my kind Love to all my dear Friends with you, and near you, as duly as if I nam'd them one by one. Mine and my Wife's Love to you. Let us continue to pray for one another. *The Lord be with your Spirit.* I remain

Your assured Friend in the Lord,

Water-Stratford,
Mar. 8. 1676.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XX.

Dear Friend,

I Thank you for your Letter, and am glad to hear you are so well settled; but especially of the good Frame of your Mind, which God preserve for his Glory. I desire you may still cherish Thoughts of your own Mortality. All our Meditations and Preparations are little enough

enough to fit us for a dying Hour. Hold fast what you have receiv'd; make much of your Experiences. Doth not Experience tell you, *That the worst of the Ways of God, are better than the best of the Ways of Sin?* When you see the Abundance and Glory of the World, pray for the *Light of God's Countenance*. When the Soul saith, *the Lord is my Portion*, it is satisfied; whilst others, who have their *Portion in this World*, remain unsatisfy'd.

Watch over your Heart and Tongue, and Life. Watch against Sin; watch unto Duty; watch for the Coming of Christ. *Seek the Lord, seek his Strength, seek his Face evermore.* Be not weary of well-doing, and waiting upon God. Remember what you hear, what you read, what you pray for; and live accordingly. The God of Peace be with you.

My Wife and I send our hearty Love to you, and your Brothers, and my Cousin *Betty*. We are in good Health at present, blessed be the Name of the Lord. I hope your Brothers profit in Learning. The Lord give every one of them a Portion of Grace. Commending you to the Protection, Direction, and Comforts of the blessed God, I rest

Your truly loving Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Feb. 23. 1676.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXI.

Dear Friend,

I Received yours, and should be glad to hear where, and in what Condition you now are. Want of Jealousy and Zeal for the great Name of God, deserves to be complained of. I am glad it is your Burden ; nevertheless I would not have you to be discouraged. It is a sound Conclusion of Divines, *That a Christian may be more sensibly affected with outward Things, which touch the Senses, than with spiritual Things ; and yet have a more inward, deep, and hearty Concern for Spirituals.* He may have a more radicated Love to God, than to any earthly Things ; he may have a more judicious Hatred of Sin than of any Plague ; he may have a more solid, profound Grief for the Dishonour of God, than for an Injury done to his earthly Relations ; albeit he may be under more vehement Passions, and may shed more Tears for Wrongs done to his Friends, or for Plagues inflicted upon his Body, than he doth for spiritual Evils. Besides, I am glad Almighty God hath so far enlightened your Mind, to see so much of the Evil of Sin as to be displeased with yourself for being no more displeas'd at it. It is some Argument of Softness, when the Stone grates upon the Flesh, and makes it bleed. To be sensible of Hardness argues that Hardness doth

doth not prevail. — God go on with his Work in your Heart, and make all Graces abound in you. Wait continually upon your God. *Seek the Lord, seek his Strength, seek his Face evermore. Above all Gettings get Wisdom; get Understanding, forget it not.*--- Let me know how it is with you; and whether you have lighted into good Company. With our Loves, I rest

Your loving Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Apr. 26. 1677.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XXII.

Honest and dear Friend,

GOD Almighty bless you, and keep you, and make his Face to shine upon you, and give you Peace: The Lord lift up the *Light of his Countenance* upon you, and encourage you beyond all Discouragements.

I rejoice to hear of your Care to keep Sabbaths; and your Willingness rather to suffer for keeping them, than to sin in breaking them. Undoubtedly it is better to suffer the greatest Suffering, than to sin the least Sin. *If we keep Sabbaths holy, Sabbaths will keep us holy.* Be much in Prayer. Be always watching against Sin, over your Heart, unto
2 Duty,

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Duty, and for the Coming of the Lord. Be always in your earthly Calling, or in your heavenly Calling, or in some Way that may fit you for these Callings. Be heartily content with that Condition that Divine Providence, or your good Parents, shall call you to. *Adorn every State by Religion, and adorn Religion in every State.* Labour in all Things to please God, that through you God's Name may be honoured, and his Ways the better thought of.

I am glad to hear of your Willingness to depart out of this World. The Rule is, *Vitam in patientiâ, mortem in desiderio habendum est.* We must be content to live, willing to die. I pray God to use you whilst you live, and not to refuse you when you come to die. I hope you will live to glorify him on Earth. I beseech God to preserve your Body and Spirit.

'Tis Saturday, and my Work is upon me, which makes me take my Leave of you sooner than else I should do. I should be glad to hear from you. God be with your Spirit. I rest

Yours in Christian Affection,

Water-Stratford,
Mar. 17. 1676.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XXIII.

My dear Friend,

THE Lord love you, and bless you, and keep you, and make his *Face to shine upon you*. I beseech him to stablish your Heart with Grace, and preserve you harmless and blameless unto the Coming of Christ. Cleave unto God with full Purpose of Heart. Be assured that the World is Vanity, Sin is Folly, Christ is All in All. Live *upon* God by Faith, live *unto* him by Obedience. *Watch and pray, that you enter not into Temptation*. Cherish good Motions, quench bad. Honour God by a faithful Discharge of Duties, personal and relative. Be assured your *Labour is not in vain in the Lord*. *Cast not away your Confidence, which hath great Recompence of Reward*.

I was last Week at *Mursley* to see your Mother, who was ill; but removing to *Great Brickbill* she found herself better. I hope God will restore her to you all, for his Glory and your Comfort. We are all at present in good Health, through God's Goodness.

My Wife and Mrs. *W.* and all your Brothers send their several Respects to you, and so doth

Your sincere Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Water-Stratford,
May 17. 1677.

LETTER

Reverend Mr. John Mason. 131

LETTER XXIV.

My dear Friend,

I AM glad to hear of your Proficiency in the good Ways of God. The further you walk in them the sweeter you will find them, and the better you will like them; and therefore I beseech you, *for God's Sake, and for the Lord Jesus Christ's Sake*, not to hearken to *the World, the Flesh, or the Devil*, for they would take you off from the *pure and pleasant Ways of God*. Blessed is he that watcheth, and happy is the Man that feareth always. *Commune with your own Heart; consider your latter End. Look at Things eternal.* What is the World to the Soul? The Judge is before the Door. Pray continually. Own the Substantials of Religion.---I told you my Mind before we parted in the Cellar-Chamber; and my Prayers are for you by Name. *Heart-work is better than Head-work. It is a better Temper to be fervent in Charity, than in Disputes.* Own the Image of Christ, wherever you see it; and beg Wisdom of God, who will give it you liberally. Judge others *with a Judgment of Charity* (as the Apostle Paul doth) but judge yourself with a *Judgment of Verity and Severity*. Spare not a Cor-

ruption. Slack not a Duty: Be always *abounding in the Work of the Lord.*

My dear Friend, I received your kind sympathizing Letter, and thank you for it. I sent to you an Answer, but it could not find you out; and therefore I send this by your Mother, whom I saw last Week, blessed be God, finely supported. ---- With mine, my Wife's, Cousin H----'s, and your Brothers Respects to you, I rest

Your assured Friend,

Water-Stratford,
July 20. 1677.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XXV.

Dear Friend,

I Thank you for your Letter. God hath blessed me with a Son; and we are all in good Health, God be praised. My Brother *Wyat* was suddenly taken away, and my Sister is left a poor sorrowful Widow. See the Course and Fashion of the World; first the Birth of a Son, then the Death of a Brother. God never changes, never dies. Happy are they that have God for their God! they are sure of something, or rather of all. *If a Man had the whole World be were sure of*

Reverend Mr. John Mason. 133

*nothing.---*There is nothing like *close Communion with God*. Watching and praying, and Peace with God, makes a Man's Life comfortable in despite of all the Rage and Fury of Earth or Hell. Follow on to know God, and you shall know him more. The Lord stablish your Heart with Grace, and give you a further Experience and Liking of his good Ways.----It would be much to my Satisfaction to hear of your Proficiency in a *Christian Way*, and that your *Soul prospers*. O that I may rejoice in the Day of Christ upon your Account! That I have not *run in vain*, nor *labour'd in vain*. --- I wish you a good Settlement, and under a good Master. God's holy and wise Providence take the Care of you, that you may be dispos'd of to your eternal Good.-----Mine and my Wife's, and Mrs. W----'s Love to you. Your Brothers send you their due Respects. I am

Your hearty assured Friend

Water-Stratford,
Oct. 10. 1677.

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XXVI.

Dear Friend,

I Thank you for your Letter. I earnestly desire your Proficiency and Comfort in the *good Ways of God*. A Christian must be *humbled*, but never *discourag'd*. The first is a Duty ; the second is a Sin. Though the bare talking of the Lips tends only to Penury ; yet talking of God, and of the Things of God, from the Heart, is Part of the Christian Practice, especially among those that are endued with a Sense of Religion. *Our Words must be savoury, seasoned with Salt ; tending to Edification ; and such as may minister Grace to the Hearers.*

I commend to you secret Duties. *A Christian is what he is between God and his own Soul*. Go to God for God ; go not from God without God : Seek his Face in Christ. Endeavour for a Sense of his Favour, and the Supply of his Spirit. You have the blessed and most worthy Name of Christ to speed your Requests ; therefore let nothing lie upon your Heart to trouble you. It is not only a Suffering but a Sin, to let any Thing lie upon your Heart to trouble us, when we have a God that bids us *cast all our Care upon him*. God will deal familiarly with you ; he will be all Things to you, if you depend upon him. If your Spirit flags or faints, search the Cause

Cause of this Untowardness and Averseness, and conclude, it is not well with you till you have recovered a cheerful, obedient Frame of Heart, that you can say from your Soul, *Lord, whom have I in Heaven but thee? Whom have I in Earth but thee?*

Two Things resolve upon by the Grace of God, *viz. To judge yourself; and to judge nobody else.* God requires these two Things, *To be severe towards yourself; and charitable towards others.* This will bring you Comfort. Attend to the Vitals and Essentials of Religion; they will nourish the Life and Power of Godliness in your Heart.

Three Things make a Christian, *viz. Repentance towards God; Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and sincere and universal Obedience.* Mind these three Things, and the God of Peace shall be with you. ----- Assure yourself, *There is such a Thing as Religion in the World, though some deride it, and others falsely pretend to it.* There is such a Thing as Communion with God.-----Seek Comfort in God through Christ, there it is to be found; rest not till you have found it, and then your Soul will say, *This is that I would have; this satisfies and refreshes.* If a Man hath his Chest full of Treasure, what cares he though he be call'd a poor Man; He hugs himself, and saith, *Populus me sibilat, at mibi plaudo.* So if a Man be judged a Hypocrite it matters not, so long as he hath the Evidence of his Sincerity in his

Bosom ; a *Testimony* within that *he hath pleased God*. ----- In a great House there are Grooms and Scallions, yet we say, *It is not their House*, it is such a Nobleman's House, he owns it ; so there is not a Christian in the World but hath vile Slaves lodging within him, but Christ is *Lord of the House*. Corruption *rebels*, but *Grace reigns*. There are two Houses, two Parties, Christ's Side and the Devil's ; and a Conflict between them. If it were not so ; if it were not for this inward Conflict, Earth would be Heaven ; for outward Opposition would be nothing, if it were not for this inward Corruption. Well, but *Quod non placet, id non nocet*. If Sin be our Grief and Hatred it shall not be our Ruin. Christ's Side shall prevail.

I commend you, my *dear Friend*, to the Grace of God, which is able to illuminate your Mind, to govern your Spirit, and to preserve you to his everlasting Kingdom. I rest

Your sincere Friend,

Water-Statford,
Dec. 15. 1677.

JOHN MASON.

LET-

LETTER XXVII.

My indeared Friend,

IT is the Duty of every true Christian to give God the Glory of his Grace. *We can never bless God enough for his Patience, that hath kept us so long out of Hell; nor for his Mercy, that so earnestly invites us to Heaven.* Is it nothing, that the Lord is continually following us with Terms of Peace, and Tenders of Mercy, and beseeching us to be reconciled? — Say not in your Heart, *I have nothing of Christ in me*, because you have not attained to such Perfection and Assurances as you desire. It was the Saying of a good Christian, *I bless God for a good Thought.* Bless God for any Token of his Love; any Portion of his Spirit. Thou canst not say, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*; but canst thou not say, *They are confest; they are confest over the Head of the Scape-Goat?* Dost thou heartily confess thy Sins unto God, with all their Aggravations? O! it is a great Mercy. ---- Thou canst not say, *Thou hast an Interest in Christ*; but hath not Christ an Interest in thee? Hath he not won thine Heart and Affections? O! It is a great Mercy ---- Thou sayst possibly, *I am not worthy to be called a Child of God.* But doth not God receive and treat thee as a *Father*? The Prodigal (*Luke xv.*) acknowledg'd, *He was*
not

not worthy to be called a Son ; but yet his Father received him. ----- Again, it may be *thou complaineſt of Sin* ; but is it with thee as it was formerly ? Shouldeſt thou not bleſs God for ſome Amendment ? If a ſick Man be any Thing better'd in his Health (tho' he ſtill be very bad, yet) he will tell his Friends, *He is ſomewhat better than he was*, and he bleſſes God for it. Beſides, tho' Sin dwells in thee, yet, perhaps, it is the Grief of thy Soul : Thou art its *Captive*, not its *Convert*. As Sin is againſt thy Soul, ſo is not thy Soul againſt Sin ? If it be thy *Grief* it ſhall not be thy *Ruin*.

Again it may be *thine Heart is troubled in an Hour of Temptation* ; but haſt thou not ſometimes enjoyed ſweet Peace with God ? Were not thine earthly Delights vain ? Canſt thou not ſay now, *O quam ſuarve eſt iſtis ſuarvitatibus carere ? One Quarter of an Hours Communion with God is worth all the Delights in the World ?* Canſt thou not call to Mind ſome of God's former Loving-Kindneſſes ? Haſt thou not ſometimes taſted and ſeen how good the Lord is ? ---- *What a Mercy is that !* ---- Again, *thou art not aſſured of Heaven, and thou wanteſt an Assurance thereof*. But thou haſt ſuch Hopes of Heaven as thou wouldeſt not exchange for all the Kingdoms of the World ; and ſhouldeſt thou not bleſs God for that, which is more to thee than all the World ? ----- Again, *Thou ſinneſt through*

through Mistake or Passion. But canst thou find in thine Heart to sin against God? He that is born of God cannot sin; that is, he cannot find in his Heart to Sin, because he is born of God. ----- Again, it may be *thou complaineest of a dead Heart*. But is there not some Life in thee? Deadness stands in Opposition to *Liveliness* as well as *Life*. If thou art dead, that is, *not lively*, yet bless God that thou art not quite *dead in Trespasses and Sins*. --- Again, it may be *thou complaineest of a hard Heart*. But thy Heart is not so hard but it feels its Hardness. Did *Pharaoh* complain of the Plague of a hard Heart? He felt it not; he was all Stone. But if thy Heart feels its Hardness, 'tis a Sign there is something of *Flesh*. Bless God for that Covenant-Mercy, *a Heart of Flesh*. ---- Again, it may be *the Lord tarrieth or hideth himself from thee*. But art thou not willing to wait upon him, and to wait for him? Dost thou wait under his Table for Crumbs? Dost thou wait at his Gate for Mercy? Well, *The Lord is good to them that wait for him*, Lam. iii. 25. ---- Again, it may be thou complaineest, *Thou art often out of Frame, or of an uneven Temper; sometimes praying, sometimes sinning, &c.* But though thou art not always the same, yet God is, and Jesus Christ is; and therefore it is that *we are not consum'd*. ----- Again, it may be thou think-
est *thou shalt never be able to suffer for Christ,*
thy

*thy weak Nature shrinks and trembles at the Thoughts of it; thou art afraid thou shalt rather deny thy Saviour, than thy Name, thy Liberty, or thy Life. It is true, if thou shouldest be left to thyself, it would be so; but God is faithful, and he will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able to bear. He will not send thee into a Wood to fell an Oak with a Penknife. When he calls thee to the Work thou never didst, he will give thee the Strength thou never had'st. ----- Again, it may be, thou fearest thou shalt fall away, and shalt never hold out to the End. But doth not this Fear of thine rather secure thee than betray thee? Does it not quicken thee to Duty, to watch and pray, &c. It is a Mercy if it be such a Fear and Trembling as thou art working out thy Salvation by. But wherefore dost thou doubt? Hath God ever failed thee at thy need? When the Disciples began to be concern'd about Bread; saith our Saviour, *Do you not remember how many Baskets full ye took up at such a Time? And how many at such a Time? Are your Hearts still harden'd?* So say I, remember how God hath comforted you *at such a Time, or such a Time, and be not faithless but believing* ---- The Lord inspire your Heart with Courage and Comfort, that you may persevere in his good Ways unto the End. The Lord be your Keeper, your Guide, your Portion for ever.*

I shall

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I shall be glad to hear how it fares with you. I hope we are not unmindful of one another, though there had been an Interruption of *Epistolary Converse*. I suppose you might not receive my last *Letter*. With mine, my Wife's, Mrs. W-----'s, your Brother's, and *Martha's* hearty Loves and Respects, and all good Wishes, I rest

Your affectionate Friend,

Water-Stratford,

JOHN MASON.

Apr. 16, 1678.

LETTER XXVIII.

My dear Friend,

THOUGH my Time be short, yet I could not omit to let you know what a Refreshing it was to my Spirit, to receive so good a Letter from you. The Lord carry on his Work effectually in your Heart. If thou hast Grace, thou hast a great Charge about thee : Satan and his Instruments will endeavour to rob thee of it, but they shall not prevail. *Our Life is hid with Christ in God ; and when Christ who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in Glory.* Only let us watch and pray, that we *do not enter into Temptation*. Encourage yourself in Christ, and God's gracious Promises ; as I find you do, blessed be God. Keep close to God. Stand in
awe

awe of your own Conscience. Pray constantly and fervently. Wait upon God continually. Abhor the Appearance of Evil, *my faithful and dear Friend*. ----- The Lord keep you through his Name, and command his Loving-Kindness towards you. The Lord enlarge the Hand of his Bounty towards you. The Lord fulfil the good Pleasure of his Goodness towards you, and *the Work of Faith with Power*. I hope we shall meet on Earth; if not on Earth, I hope in Heaven, through the Riches of Free-Grace. Grace be with your Spirit.

Take this as snatch'd from my urgent Occasions; and be assured of the hearty Affections and Prayers of

Your loving Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Dec. 8. 1678.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XXIX.

My affectionate and dear Friend,

YOU oblige us by your good and kind Letters, and the News you send us. I hope you have that special Gift of God, *Faith*. Now is a Time to exercise it. Now God's *Wrath* seems to be *kindled a little against the Nation*, *Blessed are all those that put their Trust in him*.

O let

Reverend Mr. John Mafon. 143

O let us lay up for ourselves a Treasure in Heaven! O that we were wise to make Provision for our Souls, whilst we enjoy our Lives! That when our Lives shall be lost our Souls may be safe, and that for ever. ---- What a Mercy is it that we have a God to go to? And the Name of Christ to go to him in? *Antichrist* is cruel, but *Christ* is merciful. Let our Souls fall into the Arms of *Christ*, though our Lives should fall into the Hands of *Antichrist*. O that *our Spirits may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus!* And that we may meet at last in Heaven! ----- O! pray, pray that he would bless, guide, preserve and keep you and me, us and ours, by the Holy Ghost, that we may never fail; but *be faithful unto Death, that we may receive a Crown of Life.*

The Lord manifest himself unto you in the Riches of his Love; and bless you abundantly with all heavenly Favours! Be encourag'd to persevere in Well-doing, for *you shall reap if you faint not.* O let us live by Faith till we shall live by Sight. Let us walk with God till he shall take us. ---- Mine and my Wife's Love to you. Pray for her and me. The Lord watch over your Spirit, and charge his Providence with you; and command all things to work together for your good. I remain

Your faithful Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Mar. 31, 1679.

JOHN MASON.
L E T.

L E T T E R XXX.

My dear Friend,

I AM sensible of your Love to us. You mourn with us, and rejoice with us; and I hope you pray for us, and praise for us. And therefore I must needs desire your temporal, and especially your eternal Welfare. I rejoice in the Hopes of your Stedfastness in Christ. Blessed be God who hath preserved you, and followed you with the Motions of his good Spirit. The Lord carry on his Work in our Hearts, that we may at last meet in his Kingdom. Be encourag'd still to depend on God. converse with him by Faith, Meditation, and Prayer. If any despise the good Ways of God, I trust you can justify them by your own Experience. God's Work is Wages, and *in keeping his Commandments there is great Reward.* Go on (*my dear and faithful Friend*) go on in the Strength of God. Follow after *Righteousness, Holiness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness.* Labour after farther Measures of Grace, and more intimate Acquaintance and Communion with God. ----- *The Way of the Lord is Strength to the Upright.* The farther a Man walks in the good Ways of God, the better he will find them. Let us live by Faith, till we shall live by Sight. Let us breathe by Prayer, till we breathe out our Souls into Christ's Bosom.

fom. ----- Say, we are weak (as it is most true;) our God will strengthen us. A Christian cannot keep himself, but he *is kept by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.* ----- Therefore we must commit our Souls to God's Keeping, and derive Supplies of Strength from Jesus Christ. O that we might daily *receive of his Fulness, even Grace for Grace!* When Satan tempts, or the World tempts, fly to Christ, and he will succour. If your Heart be dead, go to Christ, and he will quicken it.

I commend you to Christ in my Prayers; I commend Christ to you in my Letters, Christ is All in All. *Because I live* (saith he) *ye shall live also.* Christ sweetens Life, Death, the Grave, Resurrection, Judgment, Heaven, Eternity: Christ sweetens all. ----- Do you not love a Man when you see (*aliquid Christi*) something of Christ in him? Do you not love a Book when you read something of Christ in it? Are not the Ordinances dear to you, because Christ is to be seen through these *Lattices*? And do you not love Christian Assemblies, because Jesus Christ walks in the Midst of the *golden Candlesticks*?

My dear Friend, I hope you truly belong to Christ, and will one Day see his Face with Joy. He is our Priest, he is our Surety, he is our Advocate at the right Hand of the Father. O let us prize him, and praise him

to Eternity. ----- To the Lord's almighty Protection, and most gracious Favour, I commit you, remaining

Your assured faithful Friend,

Water-Stratford,

JOHN MASON.

Sep. 12. 1676.

L E T T E R XX.

My very affectionate, and very dear Friend,

I H O P E there is an indissoluble Knot between us that neither Silence nor Distance can break in Pieces ; I mean the *Unity of the Spirit* ; which will out-stand all carnal Alliances, founded in Blood or Marriage ; and all temporary Confederacies grounded upon Interest or Temper. Time often breaks the *last*, and Death ever dissolves the *first* of these Ties and Communications. But spiritual Friendship grows by Time, and is perfected by Death ; it lasts and holds for ever. The Time comes when there will be no Friendship but spiritual Friendship. When *Eve* awoke out of *Adam's* Side, how was he joyed in her ? *This is Bone of my Bone, &c.* But when they had sinned he bitterly accused her at the Bar of God. Such will the End be of all that jocund Friendship of all unregenerate Allies ; they will be divided at the Bar of God, and no otherwise united, than as
Tares

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Tares are in the same Bundle, whose Nearness does not help to consume one another.

But, I hope, *my dear Friend*, we are one Spirit in Christ for ever ; I hope we are met in him through Grace ; shall meet with him in the Clouds ; and shall be ever with him in Heaven. In the mean Time I condemn and abhor myself, that when Divine Providence gave me a long wish'd for Opportunity of seeing your Face, I was no more inward with you ; and that I so foolishly lost the Advantage I then had of consulting and farthering your spiritual Estate.

Sorry I am there was so little of Heaven, so much of Earthliness and Carnality in my Conversation with you. And this I write with Grief and Shame. How often have my Bowels yearned towards your Soul ! that I have thought, *O that you were but near me, or by me ! O that we had but an Opportunity of discoursing together of Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God ! -----* I had an Opportunity ; I say, I had an Opportunity.----But it is gone, it is gone ! and whether I shall ever have the like again, I know not. *The Lord forgive me ! -----* Though I have not been my Brother's Keeper, yet I will commit my Brother to that God, who is able to keep him *from this present evil World* ; and from every evil Work, unto Life eternal. ----- The Lord, by his Spirit, breathe into you better Meditations than I could pos-

possibly have suggested. I should have spoken to you; but yet I may speak *for* you, and you for me, to that God who is with us both at the same Time; and who can bless us both out of the Riches of his Grace and Goodness in *Jesus Christ*. In whom I am,

Dear Sir,

*Your affectionate Friend,
that longs for your everlasting Happiness;*

*Water-Stratford,
Feb. 9. 1679-80.*

JOHN MASON.

LETTER XV.

To the same.

My dear Friend,

YOURS I received not till about a Fort-night ago, for it lodg'd at *Mursley*. I am not unmindful of you. I counsel you to sanctify Sabbaths. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath, and that will be a Means to keep you holy.—And pray continually. Wrestle with God for the Pardon of your Sins. Confess them *over the Head of the Scape-Goat*, *Jesus Christ*. Beg for the Spirit of Application, that you may apply Christ to yourself; apply the Promises when you hear them, or read them.

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them. The Word does us good when it is applied, and Providence do us good when they are apply'd. The Lord teach us *so to number our Days*, as we may *apply our Hearts to Wisdom!* And so to hear, as we may apply our Hearts to the Practice and Obedience of the Word!

I pray God carry on his Work in your Heart, that you may grow in Grace, as you grow in Years. O! that in these dark and dangerous Days, we may fly to our God to hide us, cry to our God to help us; and he will be a *present Help in the Time of Trouble.*

I should be glad to hear any Time from you of the Case of your Soul. Have a special Care of that. We must shortly *put off these Tabernacles*; our Souls will return to God for their Sentence. O that we may be changed by Grace, before we are changed by Death! I hope we shall meet in our Father's House where *are many Mansions.* The Lord be your Guide, your Keeper, and your Comforter. ---- Mine, and my Wife's and Sister Wyat's Love to you. I rest

Your affectionate Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Oct. 1. 1681.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

*To the same:**Dear Friend,*

AS Sweats are good for a Man's Body, if a Man comes well out of them; so Afflictions are good for the Soul, if a Man come well out of them. I wish you may come out of your Sickneſs, and that you may come well out of it. *It is good for you that you have been afflicted, if you can ſay, I bleſs the Lord, I ſee the Vanity of the World, the Uncertainty of the World, and the Approach of Judgment.* It is good for you that you have been afflicted, if you have been taught by it, *that Chriſt is beſt, and Sin is worſt. O! for the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, to waſh away my Sins, and to deliver me from the Wrath to come.* You come well out of your Afflictions, if you are more ſerious, more cautious, and more circumſpect; more watchful and prayerful, more ſpiritual and heavenly-minded.

Death is a good Debt and muſt be paid. *The Cluds return after the Rain.* O prepare carefully for your latter End. What Time you have to ſpare from your worldly Occaſions, ſpend it in your Soul's Concernments. Accuſtom yourſelf to Prayer, to good Thoughts, to reading of good Books, eſpecially

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ally God's Book. *Labour to be what all wish they had been when they come to die.* Consider, and think of the best Things, and keep the best Company. ----- In every Thing aim at God's Glory, and your eternal Salvation. ---- As we have lived under one Roof together, I desire we may live in our heavenly Father's House together; and be for ever with the Lord. No more, but hearty Love from

Your loving Friend,

Mursley,
July 11. 1683.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

To Mr. John Mead.

Dear Friend,

THE Lord be with you ! The Lord shine upon you in the Face of Christ. ---- O seek the Face and Favour of God. He that findeth Christ findeth Life ; he findeth the sweetest of all Blessings ; he findeth the Pearl of greatest Price. Christ is the *Lamb of God that taketh away the Sin of the World.* Sin will find us out, if Christ do not hide us. But he spreads his Wing, and calls us to come under it. The Lord bring you under the Wing of Christ ! under Covenant Protection, my dear Friend, that your *Soul may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus.*

Beg not only Pardon but Purity of Heart, desire a *new Nature*, that you may serve the Lord in *Newness of Life*. *Watch and pray* against Sin; and every Night examine yourself how you have spent the Day. Bless the Lord for what Good he hath enabled you to do, and confess, and be humbled if you have thought or spoke, or done any Evil. Walk as in the Sight of God, speak as in the Hearing of God; do all Things as in his Presence, who is our Judge.

I commend you to the infinite Love of God, and rest

Your loving Friend,

Mursley,
Jan. 26.

JOHN MASON.

L E T T E R XXXV.

To the same.

Dear Friend,

I Desire your Happiness in all Respects, and that that God who gives you Health and Strength for your earthly Calling, may enable you for the Duties of your heavenly Calling; and that whilst your Hand is in the World, your Heart may be in Heaven.

I hope you do conscientiously observe God's Sabbaths, and delight in his Ordinances. And that you experience the Sweetness of Communion with God, and of his Service, which
is

Reverend Mr. John Mason. 153

is perfect Freedom. I desire that you may continue in Well-doing, that you may be *faithful to the Death*, that you may receive a *Crown of Life*. *To keep a Conscience void of Offence*, must be your daily Exercise, and it shall be your daily Comfort.

I hope you visit the Throne of Grace daily, and find Prayer to be your chief Delight, and the best of your Fare. Confess what you find amiss in yourself. Beg Pardon and Sanctification. Endeavour to walk closely with God ---- There is nothing like close Communion, and close walking with God. ---- I should be glad to hear of your Soul's Prosperity. Tho' I seldom write to you, you are not out of my Heart, nor out of my Prayers. My Service to your good Brother *William*, of whose Recovery I long to hear, and to your Brother *Samuel*, to whom I thought to write, but at present want Opportunity. — The Lord Jesus be with you. In him I am

Your faithful Friend,

JOHN MASON.

Dec. 7.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

To the same.

My loving Friend,

YOUR Condition puts me in Mind of a Speech of *Jacob*. ---- *And now I must*

provide for my own House also. I desire the Lord may dwell in your Heart and in your House. The Patriarchs were wont, where they pitch'd, there to rear Altars; never accounting themselves settled till the Worship of God was settled among them.

My Friend, *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* I hope you are in Christ, and have the *Spirit of Christ dwelling in you.* — Then are you free from the *Law of Sin and Death.*

I desire your House may be a *Bethel*, not a *Bethaven*; a House of God, and not a House of Vanity. I desire that Prayers and Praises may there be ascending, and Mercies and Blessings descending. He that provideth not for the Bodies of his Family is *worse than an Infidel*; he that provideth only for the Bodies of his Family is no *better than an Infidel.*

You will see that all that are *within your Gates keep holy the Sabbath-Days.* That will make happy Week-Days.---- The Lord bless you in your Soul, and in your Body, in your Person, and in your Family; in your *Basket*, and in your *Store*; in your *going out*, and in your *coming in*, from this Time forth, and for evermore. Amen.

The Lord keep your Heart and keep your House! I beseech him to follow you ever with the powerful Motions of his Spirit, and to keep you by his *Almighty Power through Faith*

Reverend Mr. John Mason. 155

Faith unto Salvation.—Mine, and my Wife's
Love to you, your Brothers, and all Friends.
I desire your Prayers, and remain

Your faithful Friend,

Water-Stratford,
Jan. 6. 1688.

JOHN MASON.

*A Letter wrote by the Reverend Mr. John Ma-
son, to Mr. Anthony Holmes, on the Death
of his beloved Sister Mrs. Hannah Wyat.*

THERE is no Necessity, my dear Bro-
ther, that we should, like *Niebe*,
weep ourselves into Marble, for the Loss of
our Friends. Some have admired the old
Custom of the *Thracians*, who celebrated
their Nativities with Mournings, but their
Funerals with Feasts of Joy. And for us,
who, by the Light of the Gospel, have an
Insight into, and a Prospect of Heaven; for
us, I say, to mourn beyond Measure for the
Loss of our Friends, is certainly very unbe-
coming; especially for such as did not lie
groveling on the Earth, void of heavenly
Things; but, on the contrary, so breath'd
Piety, and relish'd Heaven, that they were
even ready to expire with the Earnestness of
their

their Desires, and the Ardency of their Prayers.

And such a one was our dearest Sister, who was so enamour'd with the better Things of the other World, that nothing below could attract her Desires. --- It is not the Sharpness of her Wit, the Comeliness of her Person, the Sweetness of her Disposition, nor the rest of those moral Virtues which I so much admir'd in her; but it is her wondrous Piety, her lively Faith in her Jesus (whom she lov'd, worship'd, nay, was almost ready to die for Love of) that I would praise.

She told me a little before her Death, *I love you all dearly, but my Jesus* (which Word she expressed with a wonderful Emphasis) *is infinitely dearer than you all*. She could have had Patience to have liv'd, but to die was her great Desire; well knowing, that that would be a Passage to the full and eternal Fruition of her much desired Jesus. None ever feared Death more than she desir'd it: Nay, so vehement was her Rejoicing at the Hopes of her approaching Change, that I could not but be extremely affected with it, and a Partaker of it too. When I saw her just on the Confines of the heavenly Kingdom, as it were on the Threshold of a blessed Eternity, I was almost overwhelm'd with the Excess of my Joy.

But

But whither is she gone? In what Station is our Sister (no longer in the Flesh, but in the Lord) now placed? She is not a Shadow, but a Star; no longer a Widow, but married to her Lord, to whom she was betroth'd. This she expressed a little before her Death. When she receiv'd a most affectionate Letter from a certain Friend (who was almost dead to hear of her Illness, and earnestly desired her Health) I asked her Sentiments of the Letter; her Answer was, *I am obliged to any one who wishes me Health, or any good Thing, but O! my Jesus, my Jesus*; protesting then, that she longed for nothing more than to enjoy her beloved Jesus.

And now the blessed Time is come. Now she rejoices in her Jesus, and shall do so to eternal Ages. A blessed Sabbath hath shined on her, which shall never be darken'd with an Evening.

This puts me in Mind of another Thing. It was on the Lord's Day that our beloved Sister departed from us to her Lord. As *Lord Chief Justice Hales* died on *Christmas Day*, which he us'd to observe with great Solemnity; so that Day blessed this holy Woman, which she was wont to observe with admirable Strictness. She prefer'd one Sabbath before a thousand Week-days. I will speak a great Word. I verily believe I never took more Pains to make a Sermon, than she
did

did to apply it to her Heart ; and as in a Cabinet to treasure it in her Breast.

This her wonderful Piety I could not but admire whilst she lived ; and tho' she be dead, the Remembrance of that dies not. This I design'd to have spread abroad, that others might be mov'd with a holy Emulation of so pious an Example. Yet she (such was her Modesty) would by no Means permit it to be done in the Pulpit. For after I had heard that she had forbid all Manner of publick Panegyrics, I desired that she would, at least, give me Leave to *say* something of her ; but her Humility overcame my Importunity. But O let not so splendid an Example ever slide out of our Breasts ! Let this so excellent and glorious a Specimen of Piety, which we have seen in her, live, increase, and flourish among us.

As to what pertains to you (my dear Brother) it must needs be grievous to bear the Loss of so loving and so beloved a Woman. Even in her last and greatest Extremity, her Affection for you cool'd not at all. In this Manner she cried out, *Oh, my dear Anthony ! O ! how I love that Brother !* But there is no Need of Arguments to prove this, which was so evident thro' the whole Course of her Life. She lov'd you as a Brother, took Care of you as a Mother ; nay, and long supply'd the Place of a Mother to you.

But wherefore do I write this ? Not to increase your Grief, but for the Sake of your precious Soul. I am well assured how much she

she lov'd it. How many were her Desires and Cares, and Solicitudes, her Prayers and Tears upon your Soul's Account. She wish'd you all Happiness as to your bodily Health, in your Marriage, in your Trade, in all your Affairs; but her greatest Care was for your Soul. Love yourself as she loved you. Endeavour, with all your Strength to imitate and follow her.

She had a serious Mind, and a heavenly Breast. She was taken up with divine Things. Her Heart was in Heaven, while her Business confin'd her to Earth. She was frugal, and yet liberal. In her Temper Meekness was join'd with Fortitude. In her Practice she was industrious, but not covetous; ingenious, but not malepert; comely, and yet chaste; prais'd abroad, yet humble at home. She had great Reverence for the higher Powers, and gave great Deference to the Dignities of the Church. Against our Superiors she esteem'd it a Crime even to whisper; yet made herself equal even to her Inferiors. How many are the Poor, and Sick, and Maim'd, that she hath helped? So that she might truly have been term'd a Deaconness of the *English* Church. She dy'd to herself, that she might live to others. She was constant in Prayer; a strict Observer of the Sabbath. She lov'd the Word of God, and reverenc'd his Image in his Saints. To those she was a constant Companion, and delighted in their Com-

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pany, tho' they were by others term'd the Scum of the World. She prefer'd a Dram of Grace before the Riches of both *Indies*; yet ceas'd not endeavouring after all the Links of the golden Chain. She liv'd in Faith, and dy'd in Faith, and by Faith she fled to Christ, as to an Altar, whom she justly esteem'd the Beginning and End of her Salvation. And, finally, hence arose her Triumphs over the infernal Powers, and the horrible Pomp of Death. ---- Behold her Faith, my dear Brother, and imitate it as far as you can.

Let this suffice at present to be said of our dearest Sister, by

Your loving Brother,

Water-Stratford,
Aug. 17. 1683.

JOHN MASON.

N. B. Tho' the Letter from whence this last is transcrib'd, was not wrote in the Author's own Hand (as the rest) yet, from the pious Spirit it breathes, and the good Hand from whence it came (*viz.* Mr. *Thomas Holmes*, the own Brother of that excellent Lady whose Character it contains) I cannot but think it is genuine. However there being in many Places of it plain Marks of the *Latin* Idiom, and in some a Flatness and Stiffness of Expression, unnatural to an Original, and very different from the Life, Ease, and Vigour of Mr. *Mason's English* Epistolary Stile, I am inclin'd for these, and some other Reasons, to think that it is a Translation from a *Latin Original*, which, if extant, perhaps, would appear much more elegant.

F I N I S.

